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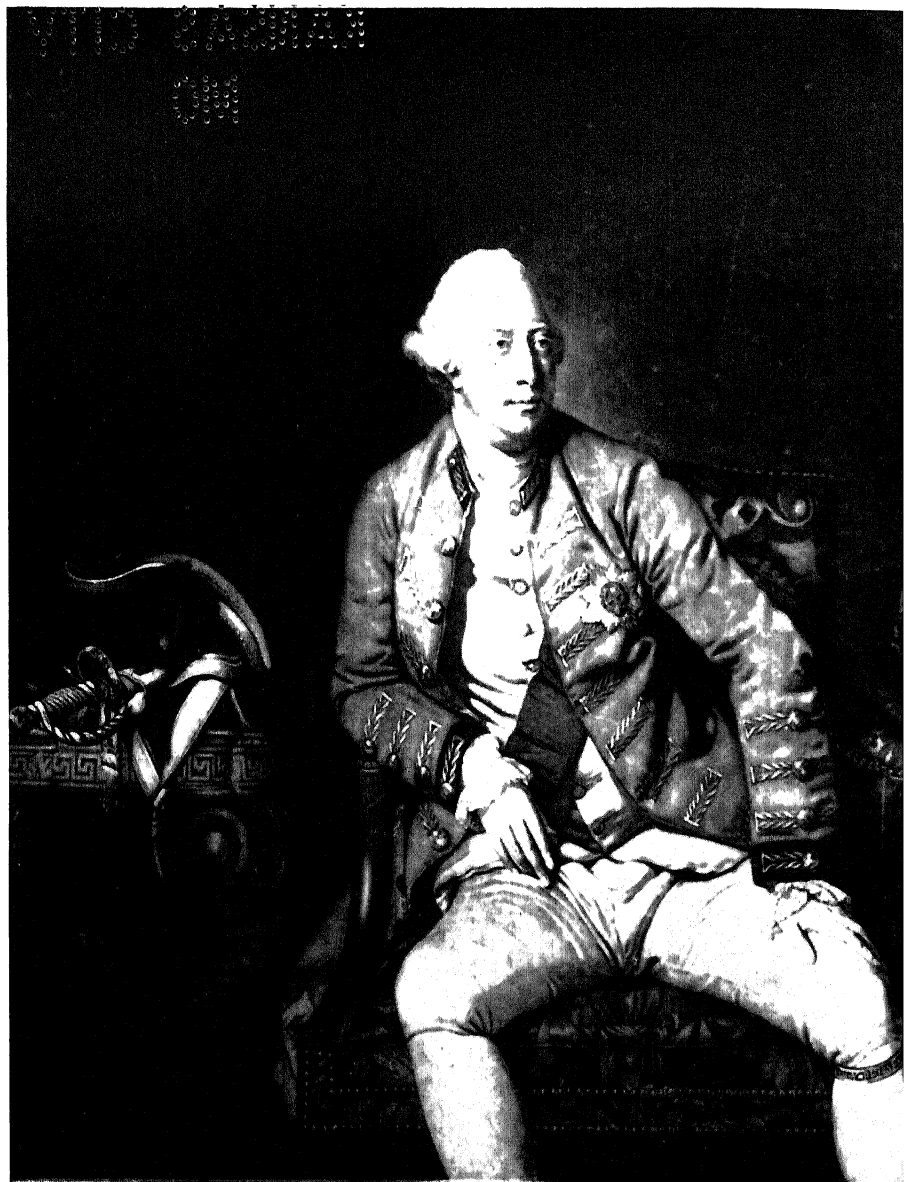
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AMERICA'S LAST KING



GEORGE III AT THE AGE OF THIRTY-FOUR

An engraving by Richard Houston from the painting by Zoffany

AMERICA'S LAST KING

AN INTERPRETATION OF THE
MADNESS OF GEORGE III

BY

Manfred S. Guttmacher, M.D.

~~~~~  
*"It shall be so:  
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go."*

HAMLET

*New York*

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1941

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A





*To my sons*

JONATHAN ADOLF *and* MANFRED RICHARD



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Few books are the work of one man. This volume is no exception. For some of its life's blood, it has drawn upon the great number of valuable works on George III and his period. Many of them have been recently published. Of these, I should like to make particular mention of Vulliamy's *Royal George*, J. D. Davies' *George III*, Mumby's *George III and the American Revolution*, Lascelles' and Hobhouse's recent lives of Charles Fox, *The Diaries of Robert Fulke Greville*, edited by F. McKno Bladon, Romney Sedgwick's *Letters from George III to the Earl of Bute*, and Young's *Poor Fred*, a life of the father of George III.

Since this work makes no pretense toward being a technical study for scholars, the bibliography is far from all-inclusive. This does not mean that I have permitted myself to indulge in flights of fancy. The source material for a study of George III is so abundant that this has been unnecessary. There is not a single factual statement in this book for which the source could not be given. For the most part, the bibliography has been limited to medical and unusual sources. The hundreds of good old standbys that have become so familiar have been omitted.

The printed source material has appeared in three different centuries. Fashions in punctuation, spelling and capitalization change with the years. No attempt has been made to reduce them to a consistent pattern. The material has been quoted as it originally appeared.

The use of the word psychiatrist may seem anachronistic, since the word did not come into use until the nineteenth century. There were doctors specializing in mental disorders during the eighteenth century, but they were merely known as physicians; I have wittingly committed this anachronism in order to delineate them better.

My debt to libraries and librarians is very great. Of all the species of mankind, librarians are probably the most civilized. For this statement there is no printed source, so that perhaps it would not be amiss to record some personal experiences.

Some years ago the late Doctor William H. Welch learned of my interest in George III. "Popsie" Welch was always eager to encourage and help any of the younger men at Johns Hopkins who had an interest in medical history. A few years before Doctor Welch's death, Sir D'Arcy

Power, the great British surgeon and the Honorary Librarian to the Royal College of Surgeons, lectured in Baltimore. Doctor Welch generously arranged a breakfast meeting with Sir D'Arcy. On my return to England to complete my study of unpublished source material, I soon learned that the great bulk of it was stowed away in Windsor Castle. Fearful that my trip might have been in vain, I appealed to Sir D'Arcy. He reassured me with the statement that Mr. Morsehead, the Librarian of the Royal Archives, was a Cambridge man, and that he had had a fine record in the war. These data seemed to me somewhat irrelevant, but apparently they were not. Sir D'Arcy presented me with a hastily written note affirming that I was a decent citizen.

After scaling the great flight of stone steps in the Round Tower of Windsor Castle, I reached the charming old room in which the Archives are kept. There, stored away in cardboard boxes, were the original letters of Great Britain's monarchs.

The letters of George III had been merely assorted by dates, and there was no record of how many were in each box. After presenting Sir D'Arcy's letter, I was assigned a table on which there was a pewter inkwell with a quill pen. I was amazed at how trusting these people were. Most of the time I worked entirely alone. After closing up shop on the first day, I sought out Miss Mackenzie, the Assistant Librarian, to tell her I was leaving. After a few embarrassing moments, I concluded that she was not going to search me. At the foot of the stairs, a soldier came to attention. Again I waited to be searched, but I found that his actions were only a part of the ancient ceremony of the changing of the guard.

The staff of the Peabody Library of Baltimore also has earned my appreciation. Then, too, there are a number of friends to whom I owe debts of gratitude. Among them, in this country, there are Doctor Emanuel Libman, Geoffrey May, Doctor S. G. Biddle, Henry L. Mencken, Morris L. Radoff, Evans Rodgers, Ford K. Brown, and Sidney Nyburg. In England, there are Theodore Lubin and Doctor Redvers Ironside.

In preparing my text for publication, I have been assisted by Rosa R. Kohn. It would be difficult to overstate my dependence on her editorial judgment.

MANFRED S. GUTTMACHER

*Windsor Hills,  
Baltimore, Maryland.*

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## INTRODUCTION



IT HAS always seemed strange to me that whereas our poets and historians have repeatedly turned their creative energies to the concept of madness in power, our men of science have completely ignored this subject. There has never been a book about an insane ruler written in English by a psychiatrist. Yet surely the idea presents a dramatic challenge to those of us who specialize in the workings of the human mind. And it is as a psychiatrist that I have presumed to take up that challenge in the study of King George III of England, one of the most important and most tragic of the world's mad rulers.

It is my conviction that a person's insanity, whatever form it takes, is inextricably tied up with his entire personality. It can be regarded neither as a divine visitation nor as a mere impersonal organic disease of the brain. It must be considered as the reaction of an individual to his internal and external environment, or, to phrase it differently, as the play of circumstances upon original equipment.

Certainly the family history is important—how important, we cannot exactly determine. Despite the fact that we have accumulated a vast medical literature on the inheritance of mental disorders, the state of our knowledge is still far from satisfactory. Mental inheritance is so complex that no Mendelian patterns have been worked out except for congenital feeble-mindedness and a few rare types of deterioration of the nervous system. But of one thing we are sure. Heredity is more important than any other single factor in determining whether or not a given individual will develop a mental disorder. This does not mean that every son of every insane person is condemned at birth to insanity. The great majority of the insane do not come from insane parents; and insane parents do not, with great frequency, produce children who will develop insanity. But all authorities agree that there is a high incidence of neuropathic tainting in the families of the insane. "Neuropathic tainting" is a broad term which refers not only to outspoken insanity but also to epilepsy, feeble-mindedness, alcoholism and the neuroses.

As we examine the history of George III's family, we find that he is

a victim of neuropathic tainting. He had one highly neurotic grandfather (George II), an uncle on his mother's side who probably committed suicide, a psychopathic first cousin (Christian VII of Denmark), two distant cousins who were psychotic, probably schizophrenic (Ludwig II and Otto I of Bavaria), and two mentally deficient nephews (House of Brunswick). Among George III's children there was one decided psychopath (George IV) and one who was emotionally unstable (William IV). A son of William IV committed suicide in a depression (Earl of Munster).

The list is imposing—frightening at first glance. Certainly George III's mental heredity was not of the strongest. And yet it is not much worse than most of ours.\* It tells part of the story of the King's insanity, but by no means does it tell the whole story.

At the outset of my study, I realized that to understand George III's mental disturbances, I had to know George III—as a link in his family chain and as a pawn in the play of history. I had to know him in sickness and in health, in his relations with his immediate world and with the great British Empire over which he ruled. In the pages which follow, I have tried not only to recreate the details of the King's periods of insanity, but also to show how his birthright and his way of life produced his mental disorder, and how in turn his mental condition affected the history of his time.

In the assembling of my material, the historians and chroniclers have played lavishly into my hands. There are few Kings who emerge more clearly from the mists of time than George III. He lived in an age richer in authoritative diaries than any other period in English history; and the diarists wrote avidly of the activities of their King. He himself was an indefatigable letter writer, and since he was an unusually outspoken man with little deceit and just as little subtlety, his letters are extraordinarily revealing. During his life the newspapers became, for the first time, actual carriers of news—and the King, of course, was always news.

George III suffered five outspoken attacks of insanity—four of which were exhaustively recorded. Everything that was observed or rumored about the King's illness was eagerly noted. Official medical bulletins, letters from physicians to ministers, and abstracts of the physicians'

\*It has recently been estimated that of the children now fifteen years of age in Massachusetts, one out of  $16\frac{1}{2}$  will some day be an inmate of an institution for mental disorders. Moreover, Doctor Dublin of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company has predicted that out of every thousand babies born in the U. S. today, ten males and three females will commit suicide.



clinical notes furnish us with authentic data. There are, for example, fifteen separate important sources of material for the illness of 1788 alone. Both this attack and the attack of 1810 became subjects of lengthy parliamentary inquiries which were published. By studying all these sources, it is possible to get a much clearer picture of George III's insanity than can be obtained by reading today's clinical record of a patient in a good modern mental hospital. In few psychiatric cases can one get so full a family history, so much detail about childhood activities, and so many objective observations of the patient's behavior during normal periods by relatively unbiased witnesses.

Even if George III had not been a King, the study of his madness would have intrinsic psychiatric importance. His first attack of mental disorder occurred when he was twenty-seven, and he died during his fifth attack, at the ripe age of eighty-two. Only rarely can we follow cases of recurrent insanity in which there is a half century between the first and last illnesses. And the factors that produced several of the attacks are unusually clear.

Although it is generally known that George III was mad at times, few people realize that he had to be confined in a strait-jacket during four separate periods of his reign. It is not unusual for a family to be tyrannized by the neuroticism of one of its members; but rarely have the political leaders of a great nation been dominated by one man's mental aberrations. King George's ministers lived in constant fear that some act of theirs might bring on a renewal of his insanity. This dread retarded certain phases of social progress in England for more than a quarter of a century.

The mental disorder which seized George III on five separate occasions was manic-depressive insanity. This is primarily a disturbance of mood rather than of mentation—though obviously the intellectual functions are also profoundly affected. This species of insanity occurs in two distinct forms. Both forms are mood disorders, but they occur at opposite ends of the range of emotion. In one attack a patient may suffer from a depression in which he is melancholic, tearful, torpid and suicidal. At another time the same patient may have a manic illness in which he is excited, restless, overambitious, overoptimistic and elated. Full recovery from any single attack of manic-depressive insanity is the rule in all but the aged. There is, however, one most unfortunate feature of the disorder—it has a great tendency to recur.

Even today there is no proven specific treatment for manic-depres-

sives. We believe that attacks can be shortened by removing the patient from the emotional turmoil which his illness has created in his family, by regulating his sleep, preserving his nutrition, quieting him by hydrotherapy and drugs, by keeping him occupied at simple tasks, and by reassuring and guiding him through frequent discussions with his physician.

It goes without saying that George III received the best treatment that his epoch afforded; in fact his treatment was, in essentials, much the same as it would be today. As we analyze it we are struck by the fact that in the past one hundred and fifty years there have been no great discoveries in the treatment of manic-depressive disorders. The developments have been in refinement of method rather than in innovations.

From my analysis of the events preceding George III's attacks of insanity, and of the illnesses themselves, it appears that frustration was the major force behind his disorders. He had an almost naïve faith in the omnipotence, the infallibility of kings. Believing that, as a king, he should be all-powerful, he became unbalanced when he found himself impotent and unable to act. There are two kinds of frustrations: those imposed upon an individual by forces outside himself, and those resulting from an inner inadequacy. George III suffered major and minor attacks of mental illness. The minor attacks followed frustrations imposed on him by the outside world. The major attacks came, as a rule, when he felt that he had thwarted himself by a lack of decisiveness intolerable in a king. Time and time again in his career as a ruler he was faced by dilemmas to which he could find no clear solution. But believing as he did that a king, by very definition, should be able to resolve all difficulties swiftly, he blamed himself mercilessly for his inability to make a decision, to see his way out. Self-blame, indecision and frustration are disorganizing to most people. They destroyed the sanity of George III.

I realize that some psychiatrists will take issue with me on this point, insisting that the patient's indecision was a premonitory symptom rather than a fundamental cause of his illness. It is true that indecision is a cardinal symptom of depressions, and that depressed periods are frequently premonitory phases of acute manic attacks. But as I have studied the data, I have become convinced that, in his case, indecision was more than a symptom. This man with a strong sense of duty, striving with all that was in him to be a forceful king, could not tolerate his own timorous uncertainty.

George III's insanity has been erroneously interpreted as evidence of general mental inferiority. Yet he was a man of real ability, a conscientious and forceful ruler, with a high moral character and an incredible knowledge of the details of government. His faults were exaggerated virtues. He took the job of kingship too seriously. The decisions which he felt called upon to make were at times too much for him. A vulnerable individual, he broke under the strain.

As a physician, I feel a natural reticence about publishing the intimate details of a patient's life, particularly his mutterings during periods in which he has lost his self-control and his reason. Whatever of this nature has been included, I feel has added essentially to a real understanding of the case. As I have proceeded with my studies, I have found that one can feel the same sympathy toward a sick man, dead for more than a century, that one develops toward the patients one personally attends.



# AMERICA'S LAST KING

"I will be very frank with you. I was the last to consent to the separation; but the separation having been made, and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an independent Power. . . . Let the circumstances of language, religion and blood have their natural and full effect."

GEORGE III, *from his colloquy with John Adams, the first Minister from the United States, on the presentation of credentials at St. James's, June 1, 1785.*

## CHAPTER I



*"We are all omnibuses in which our ancestors ride, and every now and then one of them sticks his head out and embarrasses us."*

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

ON JUNE 4, 1738, Lord Baltimore was routed from his bed at dawn and dispatched to Kensington Palace to inform King George II that the Princess of Wales was soon to be delivered of her second child. The King laughed carelessly. "So the saddler's wife is brought to bed," he said, and turned away from the messenger sent by the despised son who was heir to the throne and governor of the Saddler's Company.

Thus was the birth of King George III announced to his royal predecessor. There were no Court celebrations in honor of the new baby. His parents, Frederick Louis, Prince of Wales, and Princess Augusta, were in extreme bad favor with George II and had in fact been exiled from St. James's Palace to Norfolk House, where the birth took place. Doctor Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury, was the only dignitary to reach the anteroom before the child arrived. No doubt he and Doctor Hollings, the consulting physician, exchanged appropriate stories while the midwife, Mrs. Cannon, delivered the Princess in the neighboring room. Birth was still considered the business of women exclusively.\*

The baby was so puny, his earthly pilgrimage promised to be so ephemeral, that near midnight he was hastily baptized. Wraxall, one of the most reliable of the contemporary historians, said that George III was "indisputably a seven months baby." And there is a good reason to believe that he was a premature infant. The occurrence of his birth less than ten months after that of his sister, and the precipitancy of the labor, form presumptive evidence in support of this view.

\*Charlotte, wife of George III, was the first of the English royal family to be delivered by a man. Her accoucheur was William Hunter, one of the great obstetricians of all time.

Prematurity was not the only handicap that beset the infant George. He was, in addition, the victim of what psychiatrists term "neuropathic tainting." Although neither his parents nor his grandparents were actually insane, the history of his forebears is studded with instances of mental abnormality. On the paternal or Hanoverian side we can trace this tainting back to William the Younger, the great-grandfather of George I. He died in 1592, at the age of fifty-seven; and for the last eleven years of his reign he was manifestly insane and held incompetent to rule. Though there is no record of his symptoms, the duration of the illness and the age of the Prince at its onset suggest that he suffered from a type of psychosis which is important from the viewpoint of heredity.

Following William the Younger, none of the early Hanoverians make significant contributions to our picture of George III's background until we come to the Electress Sophia, mother of George I. Sophia must have been a power in her day—a vivid, gifted, courageous woman who spoke six languages fluently and was an authority on the philosophical works of Spinoza. It is probable that she had manic-depressive tendencies, since to offset the accounts of her brilliance and vigor, we have her daughter's record that in 1719, during one of her fourteen pregnancies, "*elle était toujours dans une mélancolie mortelle.*" However, the Electress lived to be an octogenarian and preserved her intellectual stamina to the end.

Her husband, Ernest Augustus, the father of George I, was not so fortunate. In his young manhood he was a swashbuckling warrior, given to philandering and the gayer vices; but presently his eyesight started failing and he suffered a severe nervous illness. Since the physicians of Hanover were unable to help him, the enterprising Electress summoned a Dutch empiric to court, but to no avail. The nervous disturbance increased until Ernest Augustus lost practically all power of speech. According to Cresset, a contemporary court leader, the illness was imaginary; but Cresset was one of those facile diagnosticians—flourishing today as well as in past centuries—who considered all nervous and mental disorders spurious. In truth, Ernest Augustus suffered from an organic disease of the brain which caused his death at the age of sixty-eight.

Ernest Augustus sired George I. And it is in this first of the Hanoverian Kings of England that we begin to see clearly marked some of the traits which characterize that third George with whom we are most



deeply concerned. Not that George I was George III's prototype; but the pattern begins to show itself in recognizable designs.

George I was born in Hanover in 1660. He had lived comfortably at his petty German Court for more than fifty years when the death of Queen Anne (without an heir, in spite of her seventeen pregnancies) forced him to emigrate. Begrudgingly he acceded to the demands of the Whig leaders and accepted the throne of England, to which he, as the great-grandson of James I, was entitled. Soon after he had come of age he married his sixteen-year-old cousin, Sophia Dorothea of Zelle, in a luckless union that became one of the great romantic tragedies of history. Sophia was a vivacious, charming, and witty girl. Ten years after her marriage she became involved in a passionate love affair with one of her courtiers, Count Königsmark. In 1693 the Count mysteriously disappeared; undoubtedly he was murdered. The following year George I divorced his Queen, imprisoning her in the Castle of Ahlden. And there she stayed during the thirty-two remaining years of her life, leaving Ahlden only once. When a movement of Saxon Polish troops endangered her life, she went to her ancestral home nearby, but her father refused to see her.

Sophia's two small children were taken from her and she was never permitted to see them again. No one was allowed even to mention her in the presence of her unrelenting husband, who announced that he considered her dead. The periodic pleas of the rejected wife went unanswered. This adamant stubbornness, which formed so strong a characteristic in the personality of George I, has been a dominant trait in many of the Hanoverian Kings of England.

During his reign of thirteen years, George I remained a German Prince. He made no progress in learning the customs and language of his subjects. His minister, Robert Walpole, talked to him in dog-Latin since neither could speak the other's native tongue. Lord Chesterfield has left the classic description of him. "George the First," he wrote, "was an honest, dull, German gentleman as unfit as unwilling to act the part of a King, which is to shine and to oppress, lazy and inactive even in his pleasures, which were therefore lowly sensual. He was coolly intrepid and indolently benevolent. He was diffident of his own parts which made him speak little in public, and prefer in his social, which were his favorite hours, the company of wags and buffoons. Even his mistress, the Duchess of Kendal, with whom he passed most of his time, and who had all influence over him, was very little above

an idiot. Importunity alone could make him act, and then only to get rid of it. His views and affections were singly confined to the narrow compass of his Electorate; England was too big for him."

Of the social propensities of George I, Lord Chesterfield has left us an illuminating record. "The King loved pleasure," he wrote, "and was not delicate in his choice of it. No women came amiss to him if they were very willing and very fat. . . . The standard of his Majesty's taste made all those ladies who aspired to his favor, and who were near the suitable size, strain and swell themselves like the frogs in the fable to rival the bulk and dignity of the ox. Some succeeded, and others burst."

For the rest, his interests were limited. He did show some love for music. But for the life of a statesman, the pomp and pageantry demanded of kingship, he showed neither inclination nor aptitude. "I am naturally an enemy to ceremonies and compliments," he said of himself. When he attended the Opera, he went with his servants and sat in the rear of the box. Affairs of state were beyond him. Partly through indolence, partly because he could not understand English, he discontinued the custom, important to the rulers who preceded him, of attending Cabinet meetings—a fact largely responsible for the evolution of the position of Prime Minister in English politics.

Strohmayer, in his study of the mad King Ludwig of Bavaria, treats George I at some length. "George I," he says, "was an outspoken psychopath—weak charactered, reserved and suspicious—in fact, almost paranoid. His cousin, Countess Elizabeth Charlotte von Orleans, spoke of his 'odd cranium.' On another occasion she wrote, 'He is a blunt and stubborn man. Suspicion, pride and stinginess make this prince like he is. He is so cold that he changes everything to ice.' . . . After the news of the death of his divorced and exiled wife . . . he developed a melancholy state, which persisted until his death."

Here indeed is an instance of that neuropathic tainting which figures in the heritage of the third George. And there are other significant foreshadowings. A wretched relationship existed between George I and his first-born son George Augustus, later to become George II. How early the feud started and what caused it, we cannot state with certainty. But it is known that the antagonism existed before the family left Hanover for England; and its probable basis lay in George I's attitude to his young wife. Some have said that the King seriously suspected that George Augustus was not his child, but Königsmark's. It is likely that

the son fiercely resented his mother's exile, and the fact that he was never allowed to see her.

Whatever its original cause, the antipathy persisted. After George Augustus was married and had children of his own, it flared into an ugly, open scandal when the King selected a godfather for his grandson who was distasteful to the Prince. As a result of the ensuing quarrel, George Augustus was placed under arrest and then was ordered to leave St. James's Palace with his wife. The rhymesters had a go at reporting the brawl. A ballad on the expulsion ended thus:

Then up the street they took their way,  
And knockt up good Lord Grant-ham,  
Higgledy-piggledy they lay,  
And all were rantum scantum.

Now sire and son had played their part,  
What could befall beside?  
Why the poor babe took this to heart,  
Kickt up its heels and died.

The King kept the children with him at St. James's after their parents were banished—and, adding insult to injury, he deducted the cost of maintaining them from his son's allowance. That unhappy state of affairs persisted between father and son until George I died suddenly of apoplexy in 1727.

If George I had exhibited defects in personality and character, George II was no improvement. Lord Chesterfield, who knew him intimately for forty years, scored him off for posterity. "He had not better parts than his father," wrote Chesterfield, "but much stronger animal spirits, which made him produce and communicate himself more. Everything in his composition was little, and he had himself all the weaknesses of a little mind, without any of the virtues, or even the vices of a great one. He loved to act the King but mistook the part. . . . Avarice, meanest of passions, was his ruling one; and I never knew him deviate into any generous action. Little things, as he has often told me himself, affected him more than great ones. Within certain bounds, but they were indeed narrow ones, his understanding was clear, and his conceptions quick; and I have generally observed, that he pronounced sensibly and justly upon single propositions; but to analyze, separate, combine, and reduce to a point, complicated ones, was above his faculties. . . . He well knew that he was governed by the Queen, while she lived;

and that she was governed by Sir Robert Walpole; but he kept that secret inviolably, and flattered himself that nobody had discovered it. . . . He had no favorites, and indeed no friend, having none of the expansion of heart, none of those amiable connecting talents which are necessary for both. This, together with the sterility of his conversation, made him prefer the company of women, with whom he rather sauntered away than engaged his leisure hours. He was addicted to women, but chiefly to such as required little attention and less pay . . . he was extremely regular and methodical in his hours, in his papers, and above all in his private accounts, and would be very peevish if any accident, or negligence in his Ministers broke in upon that regular allotment of his time. He had a very small degree of acquired knowledge; he sometimes read history, and, as he had a very good memory, was exceedingly correct in facts and dates."

In stature, he was short and thick. He had bulging eyes like his grandson, George III. And like him, he rose early, indulged greatly in exercise, and ate and drank sparingly, fearing obesity. He spoke English grammatically, although with something of a German accent. He had the same partiality to Hanover as his father had had, visiting there for long periods, leaving his Queen, Caroline, to rule. Hervey reports George II's declaration "that no English cook could dress a dinner, no English confectioner set out a dessert, no English player could act, no English coachman drive, no English jockey ride, nor were any English horses fit to be ridden or driven. No Englishman could enter a room and no English woman dress herself." In 1736, some wag posted a sign on the door of the Royal Exchange reading, "It is reported that his Hanoverian Majesty deigns to visit the British domains for three months in the Spring." At the same time, there was affixed to the very gates of St. James's a notice announcing, "Lost or strayed out of this house, a man who has left a wife and six children on the parish; whoever will give any tidings of him to the church-wardens of St. James's parish, so as he may be got again, will receive four shillings and sixpence reward. N.B. This reward will not be increased, nobody judging him to be worth a Crown."

Despite the Guelph tradition, George II had no great love for music or any of the arts. "Damn the Bainters, and Boets too!" he said to Hogarth when the artist dedicated his "March to Finchley" to his sovereign. He was outspoken to a fault; he was an interminable talker and could suppress nothing. And his normal ungraciousness was in-

creased tenfold when his temper was aroused. According to Wraxall, "When incensed either with his ministers or his attendants, he was sometimes not Master of his Actions, nor attentive to preserve dignity. On these occasions, his hat and—it is asserted—even his wig, became frequently the objects on which he expended his anger." Being very superstitious, he had almost as much of a penchant for quack doctors as Queen Anne. Joshua Ward, a salter who turned doctor and became renowned as "Spot Ward" because of a great facial birthmark, reduced George II's dislocated thumb. As a result of the pain connected with this manipulation, the royal sufferer cursed him and kicked his shins. The fact that Doctor Ward charged no fee proved, however, to be a remarkable anodyne to his parsimonious Majesty. As a reward, he was specially exempted from the penalties of the Parliamentary Act of 1748 restricting the practice of medicine, and further was permitted to drive his equipage, drawn by six white-plumed horses, through St. James's Park.

Like his father, George II was every inch an autocrat. "The fire of his temper appeared in every look and gesture," wrote Lady Mary Montagu. "He looked on all the men and women he saw as creatures he might kick or kiss for his diversion; and, whenever he met with any opposition in those designs, he thought his opposers impudent rebels to the will of God, who created them for his use."

His miserliness reached beyond the bounds of normality. His constant counting and recounting of the money in his pocket assumed the neurotic frequency of a compulsion. He was forever bargaining in a most unregal manner, and when vacancies occurred in his court, he postponed filling them as long as possible in order to save the salaries. Almost the only gift he ever made to his Queen was a team of Hanoverian horses; and though he used them himself almost entirely, their feed was charged to her. Sir Robert Walpole was the dominant political figure during his reign, and the King appreciated his financial acumen and his great service to the Crown. Yet the only gift he ever made to this most valued of his ministers was a cracked diamond.

In examining the personality of George II, it is indeed hard to find redeeming traits. He was, however, essentially honest. Historians generally accuse him of having destroyed his father's will as soon as he had read it; a letter from Frederick Louis to his son (later George III) recommending that he read the will of his great-grandfather, George I, indicates that the charge is not true. He had also the great personal

intrepidity which characterized his family; and once at Dettingen, when he was sixty years old, he did play the hero's part. His horse faltered during an attack, and leaping from it, he led the charge on foot. It is true, too, that he was a dapper, neat, and orderly little man. But his orderliness was so extreme as to be neurotic.

Any disruption of routine was intolerable to him. "When great points go as he would not have them," his daughter, Anne, observed astutely, "he frets and is bad to himself. But when he is in his worst humours and the devil to everybody . . . it is always because one of his pages has powdered his periwig ill, or a housemaid set a chair where it does not use to stand."

"Having done a thing today was an unanswerable reason for doing it tomorrow," Hervey says of him. "Every evening at the stroke of nine he went to his mistress, Lady Suffolk, and took a rapid walk with her back and forth down the corridor, his watch in hand, waiting for the final minute of the hour which was dedicated to this activity. From Hanover he wrote his Queen in England weekly letters of sixty and never less than forty pages, filled with nothing but meaningless trivialities, which were needless to write and completely useless to read."

Caroline Wilhelmina of Anspach, the recipient of these voluminous letters, had not been considered a very brilliant match for the heir of the British throne when she married him in 1705. Yet in every respect she outshone her royal spouse; and of all George III's immediate antecedents, his grandmother, Queen Caroline, stands out as the most capable and engaging.

Much of her early life was spent at Hanover, where she became an ardent disciple of the philosopher Leibnitz, and for many years she carried on a voluminous correspondence with him. She communicated with Sir Isaac Newton on physics, discussed orientalism with Sale, and exchanged views with Egmont on how Latin proper names should be written in English. She early recognized the unusual ability of George Berkeley, the philosopher, and offered him church preferments. Unlike her husband, she had an open and questioning mind. In 1722, while she was Princess of Wales, she became interested in smallpox inoculation, which had just been introduced into England by Lady Mary Montagu. She even went so far as to have the royal children inoculated—and that was a brave departure. She was also responsible for employing Sir Patrick Manningham to investigate the greatest hoax of a marvellously gullible century. "The Rabbit Woman," Maria Toft

of Godalming, suddenly announced that she had in the past, and would in the future, for a consideration, give birth to rabbits. All England was agog at this phenomenon, which temporarily eclipsed the "Porcupine Man" and his son, the little French woman fifteen inches high, and the farmer's dog that beat Doctor John Arbuthnot, Physician to Queen Anne, at cards. Sir Patrick, unlike the other investigators of Maria, did independent detective work. He found that her husband, aided by a Doctor Nathaniel St. Andre, was going about the distant countryside buying at any price newborn rabbits, dead or alive. With one blow, this amazing fiction was demolished.

Caroline had a very retentive memory, revelling in facts and complicated pedigrees in a most unwomanly way. She managed her difficult royal husband with great skill. In matters of state she dominated him, relying for her own judgment on the wise advice of Robert Walpole. In smaller matters she proved extremely pliable—and particularly so as regards her husband's amorous aberrations. George II was apparently a man of great sexual energy, and he had many mistresses. His wife seems to have taken a friendly interest in his extra-marital affairs of the heart, and to have encouraged him in his conquests. Once he wrote her enthusiastically from Hanover concerning a newly acquired mistress. "Love the Walmoden," he begged her, "for she loves me"; and the Queen replied, "I am but one woman and an old woman, and you may love more and younger women." On another occasion when George II was achieving international notoriety because of his carryings-on in Hanover, the Queen told Egmont that she regretted the adverse publicity, but as for herself, "she minded it no more than his going to close stool." Caroline of Anspach was no prude; her speech had unusual pungency even for that gross age.\*

On one point George II and his wife seem to have been in complete and unnatural accord—in their inhumane attitude to their first-born son. The bitterest of all the fights between the Hanoverians and their sons was that waged by George II and Queen Caroline with the Prince of Wales, Frederick Louis, the father of George III. It was a major scandal in an age of scandals. "My dear first-born is the greatest beast in the whole world," the King told Lord Hervey, "and I most heartily wish he were out of it." And Caroline, not to be outdone, declared, "Fred is

\*The Princess Royal seems to have been as frank and outspoken as her mother. When Lady Suffolk was waning at Court, the Princess said, "I wish with all my heart that he would take somebody else, that mama might be relieved from the ennui of seeing him forever in her room."

a nauseous beast and he cares for nobody but his nauseous little self."

Frederick Louis was only seven when his parents left Hanover to live in England. For the next fourteen years he remained in Germany and, when he finally did join his parents, animosity flared. In a short time he became the nucleus of political opposition to the Court party. Things came to such a pass that George II and his Queen were constantly scheming to exclude Frederick from succession to the English throne. For a time, they were said to have considered separating the Hanoverian protectorate from England, putting that small principality under Frederick's rule and placing their second son, William, on the throne of England.

The Prince made it a point to take opposite sides from his parents on every question. They were great admirers of Handel's music; so the Prince supported his rival, Giovanni Buononcini. This struggle for artistic supremacy—abetted by the Court—was scoffed at by a contemporary versifier:

Some say compared to Buononcini  
That Mynher Handel's but a ninny;  
Others aver that he to Handel  
Is scarcely fit to hold a candle.  
Strange all this difference should be,  
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Caroline's personal spleen toward her first-born knew no bounds—an unusual state of affairs, for in most instances when a father hates a son, the mother compensates for his antipathy by displaying unusually great affection toward the child. On one occasion, when a conflagration threatened to destroy the Temple, her despised Frederick ostentatiously led the fire fighters, winning great public acclaim. But heroism had no softening effect on Caroline's motherly heart. "My God," she exclaimed, "popularity always makes me sick, but Fritz's makes me vomit."

The fight between Frederick and his parents reached its climax in 1737 with the development of an open rupture between them. This was just twenty years after George II had had his great public quarrel with his father. It is strange how often children can suffer from their parents' mistakes without learning to profit by them. Here again, the fight was precipitated by the birth of a child.

By this time Frederick was married to the Princess Augusta of



Saxe-Gotha.\* The Queen had spread the rumor that he was impotent, believing that, were he to produce a child of his own, her plans to alter the succession would be thwarted. Soon after the marriage, Augusta was pregnant and the young parents went to considerable pains to conceal this fact from the conniving Queen. Later it was given out that the delicate sensibilities of George II and Caroline were violated because they were not given "the least intimation that the Princess was with child or breeding, until within less than one month of the birth of the young Princess."

Caroline was furious. "At her labor I will positively be," she told Hervey, "for she cannot be brought to bed as one can blow one's nose—but I will be sure it is her child." Frederick Louis and Augusta worked desperately to foil the Queen. At the first labor pains, Frederick secretly bundled Augusta into a carriage, and they drove from Hampton Court, where they had been staying with the King and Queen, to London. In company with a dancing master and the Prince's mistress, they drove at full gallop, rocking wildly as the carriage rose from one rut and sank into another. The young Princess's suffering was intense. They reached St. James's Palace at ten in the night. No preparations had been made for the emergency; there were no clean sheets at hand, so the delivery bed was covered with table linen. The hardy infant, a girl, was born at a quarter to eleven, and was promptly wrapped in a dinner napkin.

News of the birth reached Hampton Court at about two o'clock. George II stormed at his Queen. "You see," he exclaimed in excited German, "with all your wisdom how they have outwitted you. This is all your fault. There is a false child will be put upon you, and how will you answer to it to all your children? . . ." In half an hour Queen Caroline had started for London. Her first view of the baby brought her a certain bitter comfort. "Well, upon my honour," she said to Hervey, "I no more doubt this poor little bit of a thing is the Princess's child . . . though I had my doubts upon the road that there would be some juggle; and if there had been a brave jolly boy instead of this poor

\*As a child, Frederick had been virtually betrothed to his cousin, Wilhelmina, the daughter of the King of Prussia. But George II had come to despise Frederick the Great, who had slightly referred to him as "the Comedian" and the "Dancing Master." So, much to young Frederick's chagrin, he was forbidden to marry Wilhelmina. George II finally selected Augusta for his son on a eugenic basis. Most of the other eligible German Princesses had a taint of insanity in their families. George II observed philosophically, "I did not think ingrafting my half-witted coxcomb upon a mad woman would improve the breed."

ugly little she-mouse, I should not have been cured of my suspicions." Excitedly, she added that had it been a boy she would "have gone about his house like a mad woman, played the devil, and insisted on knowing what chairman's brat he had bought." Lord Hervey solaced the Queen, declaring that the newborn had appeared to him to be only "about the bigness of a good large toothpick case."

Augusta was allowed to keep her "poor little she-mouse" to herself "lest," as Walpole bluntly announced, "any accident might happen to this little royal arrival and the world in that case accuse the King and Queen of having murdered it, for the sake of the Duke of Cumberland." But George II and Caroline were still enraged. Frederick Louis tried to assuage them by claiming that the obstetrical specialists had misdiagnosed his wife's labor pains as "cholick," and he had rushed her to London for medical aid. No forgiveness followed this feeble excuse. Just as George II had been banished from that same Royal Palace twenty years before, and for much the same reason, now George II banished his son and his son's family. On September 12, 1737, came the official announcement: "Notice is hereby given to all Peers, Peeresses, Privy Counsellors, and their Ladies, and other persons in any station under the King and Queen, that whoever goes to pay court to their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales will not be admitted to their Majesties' presence."

Queen Caroline was not long to survive the stormy arrival of her first grandchild. On November 9, 1737, her final illness began with an attack of colic and uncontrollable vomiting. She was immediately plied with Sir Walter Raleigh's cordial, a medicine of more than fifty ingredients, which Sir Walter had invented during his imprisonment in the Tower by James I; it was used in the final illness of that monarch's elder son, Henry Frederick, who had been Sir Walter's close friend, and was also administered unsuccessfully to Charles II.

George II behaved very badly and insisted upon lying on Caroline's bed. He hated illness; he would never admit that he was ill and could not tolerate it in others. When Doctor Hulst informed him that his wife was suffering from an intestinal obstruction which might well prove fatal, he became enraged and struck the physician in the face. Formerly he had upbraided his Queen for eating too much and growing stout, but now he made her stuff food down inhumanly. "Why do you stare like that?" he asked as she looked at him in pain and despair. "Your eyes are like those of a cow whose throat has just been cut." Apolo-

getically, the dying Caroline replied that she knew that she was "very silly and very whimsical."

Two days after the onset of her illness, Caroline was operated on for strangulation of the bowel.\* The Egmont diaries contain an account of her remarkable courage during the operation under the hand of a surgeon who had parted from his wife after a quarrel. "Ranby the surgeon cut the Queen," the account runs, "who to show her contempt for the pain, asked what he would give to be using his wife in the same manner. . . . At the same time old Bussiere, who is near the age of ninety, and stood by Ranby to direct how to proceed in cutting her Majesty, happened by the candle in his hand, to set fire to his wig; at which the Queen bid Ranby stop awhile for he must let her laugh."

After the operation it was apparent that the Queen could not recover, and she accepted the fact with courage and resignation. "After fifty-five," she said, "a woman has no business to live." Her final thoughts were all for her husband. She tried to compose him to face a future without her; she even urged him to marry again. "Non," said the blunt King, "*j'aurai des maîtresses.*" "*Cela n'empêche pas,*" answered Caroline, a worldling to the end.

Her deathbed scene marked a fitting climax to the life of a woman so considerate of her husband, so unsparing of herself, so harsh to her first-born son. Sir Robert Walpole announced that the Court was clamoring to have the Archbishop of Canterbury in attendance. "Let this farce be played," he cynically suggested. "The Archbishop will act it very well. . . . It will do the Queen no hurt, no more than any good. . . ." But she was unwilling to receive the sacrament. The King had refused to admit Frederick, branding his appeal to see "his poor dying mother" but another of "the scoundrel's tricks. . . . No, no!" the King cried, "he shall not come and act any of his silly plays here. . . ." But the rest of her family was gathered around her as she calmly turned over to her husband her keys and the ruby ring he had given her on her coronation day. "This is the last thing I have to give you," she said as she placed the ring on his finger. "Naked I came to you, naked I go from you. I had everything I ever possessed from you, and to you, whatever I have I return." A moment later she gasped,

\*The fact that Caroline had developed a hernia following childbirth fourteen years before but had been inhibited by modesty from showing it to a physician is an interesting commentary on the mores of the time.

"I have now got an asthma, open the window." Then she uttered the monosyllabic command, "Pray!" Her ten days of merciless suffering had come to an end.

One can sympathize with the disloyal subject who, on Caroline's death, posted on the Exchange a placard reading,

O Death, where is thy sting—  
To take the Queen and leave the King?

George II survived Queen Caroline by more than twenty years. The most notable fact of this period from the viewpoint of what he had to contribute to his grandson, George III, was the depression he suffered immediately following his wife's death. For several months he is said to have cried without restraint—he grew quite thin and he seemed to lose interest in everything. On one occasion he gazed in solitude at her portrait for two hours. Then, as if startled from a trance, he suddenly yelled, "Take the picture away, I never yet saw a woman worthy to buckle her shoe." For some time the royal family used imperfect packs of cards from which all the Queens had been extracted by the Princess Amelia. When George II opened Parliament, a few months after the Queen's death the tears ran down his cheeks. The King asked that he be buried next to Caroline and that a side be knocked from each of their coffins, so that their mortal dust might mingle. Caroline's room was never touched—for over twenty years it remained exactly as she left it.

These evidences of grief, while they are by no means unparalleled, do suggest that George II suffered a mild pathological mood disturbance. It is common psychiatric experience that individuals with strongly developed consciences, and with potent misgivings about the way they treated their mates during life, are likely at their death to have abnormal grief reactions. Their grief unconsciously offers atonement through self mortification.

## CHAPTER II



*"The mother and the nursery always prevailed."*

EARL OF WALDEGRAVE

LESS THAN seven months after Queen Caroline died, the puny baby who was to become George III made his entrance into a wretchedly embittered royal world. The custom of securing a nobly descended wet nurse was waived because of the infant's perilous condition. Instead, the experienced wife of a gardener was employed. He rapidly rallied from Mary Smith's ministrations. By the time he was a month old, he was able to stand the ordeal of public baptism.\*

But the little Prince had a bad physical start; there was marked neuropathic tainting in his background; and, in addition, his personal position was anomalous in the extreme. He was ostensibly the heir to one of the great thrones of the world. And yet his parents were held in the deepest contempt by the ruling sovereign.

It is difficult to judge how many of the flaws in Frederick Louis' character must be ascribed to the shabby treatment accorded him by his parents. Certain it is that at the time his first son was born, he cut a somewhat ignominious figure. He was a small, frail man, and though he had refined tastes in art and some poetic pretensions of his own, many of his pastimes were of a rather low order. He frequently attended the bull-baiting at Hockley-in-the-Hole in disguise, and, like

\*That George III was acutely aware of how hazardous had been his condition at birth is shown by his letter to Lord Bristol in 1773.

"Lord Bristol,—

I have heard that my laundress Mary Smith, died on Monday. She suckled me, and to her great attention my having been reared is greatly owing; this ought to make me anxious for the welfare of her children, who by her great imprudence are left destitute of support. I therefore desire you will appoint her youngest daughter, Augusta Hicks, to succeed as laundress, who has frequently managed the business during different illnesses with which she had been afflicted."

many weak men, he had a penchant for fortune tellers, who helped him make decisions and bolstered his hopes with vain promises. He was an inveterate gambler, and quite unconscionable about debts of honor. As a wench he was indiscriminate. "The chief passion of the prince was women," said Walpole, "but like the rest of his race, beauty was not a necessary ingredient." He gave notorious parties at the house of the Princess' midwife, Mrs. Cannon, in Jermyn Street.

Frederick was a very unstable individual. He was extremely excitable and restless, with rapid changes of mood. He possessed the abundant energy of Caroline and the Electress Sophia, but it was expended diffusely and purposelessly. His open-mindedness, aptly characterized by Hervey as un-Hanoverian, was part of his instability.\*

"The character of the Prince is this," said Egmont, his contemporary apologist, "he has no reigning passion; if it be it is to pass the evening with six or seven others over a glass of wine and hear them talk of a variety of things, but he does not drink. He loves play and plays to win, that he may supply his pleasures and generosities which last are great, but so ill placed that he often wants wherewith to do a well-placed kindness, by giving to unworthy objects. He has had several mistresses, and now keeps one, an apothecary's daughter of Kingston; but is not nice in his choice and talks more of his feats this way than he acts. He can talk gravely according to his company, but is sometimes more childish than becomes his age. He thinks he knows his business but attends to none; he likes to be flattered."

This love of flattery represented an urgent need in Frederick's make-up, and was, in fact, one of his points of striking resemblance to his

\*The chief contemporary chroniclers, Horace Walpole and Lord Hervey, had a hostile bias toward Frederick Louis. Lord John Hervey was a strange fellow. An epileptic, with a constant fear of having seizures in public, he was known as "Lord Fanny" because of his effeminate characteristics. He had a good mind but was incautious enough to cross swords with Pope, who flayed him in three merciless lines:

"That painted child of dirt that stinks and stings,  
Who at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,  
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad."

Hervey is generally credited with having been the father of Horace Walpole. Their minds had in common a certain womanish interest in malign gossip. Hervey and Frederick Louis had been boon companions. Hervey passed on his mistress, Miss Vane, to Fred, then a rather common gesture of intimate friendship. When the Prince fell in love with her and she bore him a child, Hervey's jealousy and malice were aroused. He then promptly became Queen Caroline's fair-haired boy and joined her in libelling the Prince. Horace Walpole was antagonized by Frederick's leadership of the opposition against Sir Robert Walpole's government.

grandson, George IV—whereas George III was in many ways much like his grandfather, George II. Somehow, Frederick had to fight the sense of inadequacy which his parents' treatment had built up in him. He knew he was a prince; he knew that royal birth entitled him to prerogatives denied to other men. But to his shame he found that high birth did not carry with it a feeling of inner superiority. On the contrary, his shame was deeper because he felt he could not measure up to the position to which his birth entitled him. Therefore, he sought out companions to whom he could feel superior; and their admiration was as balm to his wounded self-esteem.

But in one respect Frederick Louis showed a marked and important superiority over his Hanoverian predecessors. He was a good father, conscientious, devoted, and interested; and the virtues he had not the stamina to incorporate into his own life he was at great pains to instil into his children. "Nothing gives a father, who loves his children as much as I do," he wrote on one occasion, "so much satisfaction as to hear they improve or are likely to make a figure in the world." And these were not idle words. To the limit of his capacity, he prepared his son, George, for the Kingship which awaited him.

Augusta was less tender with the boy than her husband, but stronger and more dominating. Tall, awkward, long-nosed and long-necked, she was never an attractive figure. She had intelligence, but of the stodgy, unimaginative German type, and was utterly lacking in humor.\* When she married she was still an adolescent, who played with dolls in public and was so homesick for her German governess that the Prince had to have her imported. But motherhood formed and hardened her quickly, and she took her maternal duties seriously. She nagged her children a great deal, and even after they were grown, she

\*Augusta was one of seventeen children; five brothers and one sister reached maturity. Doctor Arnold Chaplin, Harverian Librarian of the Royal College of Physicians, has written that there was mental abnormality in this family; "feeble-mindedness, if not actually insanity, had manifested itself." The author was unable to obtain Doctor Chaplin's source for this statement.

Augusta became one of the most bitterly hated women in England and was popularly known as the "witch." Legend has endowed her with a Machiavellian cunning which has never been convincingly proved. In Young's recent biography of her husband, Prince Frederick Louis, it is suggested that she sold him out to George II because the Prince's "proceedings were compromising the power of the Crown and the prospects of her son and herself," and because she loved the Earl of Bute and did not love her husband. Even the hypothesis that she murdered the Prince has been seriously advanced. But this is pure speculation and is not in accord with the medical data on the Prince's death nor with Augusta's character.

tried to maintain her control of them. Throughout her life she succeeded admirably in dominating George III.

Despite the future role that awaited him, little Prince George led an extraordinarily circumscribed existence. His mother kept him almost completely isolated from contacts with companions other than his brothers and sisters. According to her, "Such was the universal profligacy, such the character and conduct of the young people of distinction that she really was afraid to have them near her children." But there was a good deal of social life within the family group: "The Prince's family is an example of innocent and cheerful amusement," wrote Lady Hervey in 1749. "All last summer they played abroad in winter, in a large room they divert themselves at baseball, a play all who are, or have been school boys, are well acquainted with. The ladies as well as the gentlemen join in the amusement; the latter return the compliment in the evening, by playing for an hour at the old and innocent game of pushpin."

On rare occasions a hand-picked group of nobly born children were selected to join with the royal offspring in presenting plays. Prince Frederick, who fancied himself as a poet as well as an actor, wrote the prologues and epilogues. The director was a renowned actor and playwright named James Quin. When George was ten and a half they presented Addison's "Cato." Young Frederick North, later to become George's trusted Prime Minister, played the part of the traitor, Syphax, while George himself played Cato's son, Portius. The timid boy must have felt a strange vicarious bravery in reciting his heroic lines.

George had four younger brothers, one sister a year older than himself, and two younger sisters; but his only close companion was his brother Edward, who was a year and a half his junior. George did not show up very well when compared with Edward. Edward was a courageous and confident child, tellingly described as "a sayer of things." George, on the other hand, was a quiet, retiring little fellow; and it has been said that their parents showed a marked preference for Edward. According to the Earl of Shelburne, George received from his parents "treatment which went the length of the most decided contempt of him if not aversion, setting up his brother the Duke of York's understanding and parts in opposition to his, and undervaluing everything he said or did." No doubt Shelburne's account is exaggerated; no doubt George's parents made the odious comparisons with his best interests in view. But whatever their motives, George is not the first child in



history—nor will he be the last—to have his self-confidence undermined by the presence of a more promising younger brother.

Nonetheless, little George had his champions. Lady Hervey said of him that "he was in his nursery, the honestest, true, good-natured child that ever lived." Apparently his great orderliness began to develop early. When he was only eleven he noted on some of his letters the exact hour and minute that he signed them.

The schedule that the Prince of Wales drew up in 1750 for the Governor of his children shows that there was little chance for idling:

The Hours of the Two Eldest Princes

To get up at 7 o'clock.

At 8 to read with Mr. Scot [1] 'till 9, and he to stay with 'em till the Doctor [2] comes.

The Doctor to stay from 9 till Eleven.

From Eleven to Twelve, Mr. Fung [3].

From Twelve to half an hour past Twelve, Ruperti [4]: but Mr. Fung to remain there.

Then to be their play hour till 3 o'clock.

At 3 Dinner.

Three times a week, at half an hour past four, Denoyers [5] comes.

At 5, Mr. Fung till half an hour past 6.

At half an hour past 6 till 8, Mr. Scot.

At 8, Supper.

Between 9 and 10 in Bed.

On Sunday, Prayers, at exactly half an hour past 9 above stairs. Then the two Eldest Princes and the two Eldest Princesses, are to go to Prince George's apartment, to be instructed by Doctor Ayscough in the Principles of Religion till 11 o'clock.\*

Despite this elaborate pedagogical routine George proved to be a

\*[1] A distinguished mathematician made F. R. S., 1737.

[2] Probably Doctor Ayscough.

[3] Teacher of French and German.

[4] Teaching of Dancing.

[5] Violin instructor.

The following year the teaching staff was augmented by a German Writing Master, a Master of Fortification and Drawing, a Riding, and a Fencing Master.

The daily routine of the little Princes seems very reasonable when compared with that introduced by Wesley in the school which he founded at Kingswood. There the children had to get up at four. The great founder of Methodism records this remarkable specimen of the eighteenth-century child-guidance philosophy: "As we have no play-days (the school being taught every day in the year but Sunday), so neither do we allow any time for play on any day; he that plays when a child will play when he is a man."

very dull scholar. All were impatient with his progress. That he was merely lazy seems improbable because of the tremendous energy that he displayed as an adult. Yet, when his subpreceptor, Scot, remonstrated with him on his want of application, he pleaded constitutional idleness as an excuse. "Idleness, sir," answered Scot, "yours is not idleness: your brother, Edward, is idle but one must not call being asleep all day being idle." How many teachers are still uttering such admonitions! The more enlightened ones realize that marked inattention is often evidence of the day-dreaming of a timid, unhappy, and maladjusted child. Among the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle are seven large boxes filled with the school papers of George III. They deal chiefly with history and government. But there are sheets of mathematical problems, Latin and Greek vocabulary lists, notes on art and chemistry and on religious and philosophical topics. One gains the impression that at times, at least, the royal pupil must have been capable of great industry.

If his tutors were discouraged by his lack of progress, his father, at any rate, appreciated his efforts to improve himself. In a letter written to the boy when he was about ten, Frederick Louis said: "You can't imagine how happy you have made me yesterday; any mark of a sincere, or a sensible feeling heart gives me much more joy, than any signs of Wit, or of Improvement in Yr. learning, which I dare say will come also in time. You have a father who lov's you all tenderly and (who tho' peevish against Yr faults, because he wants you should shine) feels immediately the father again, when he sees you mend."

In 1751, when George was not yet thirteen, his father died of an acute pulmonary illness of a fortnight's duration. The funeral was a very shabby affair. According to Bubb Dodington, "except for the Lords appointed to hold the pall and attend the chief mourner . . . there was not one English Lord, not one Bishop and only one Irish Lord to make a show of duty to a Prince so great in rank and expectation. . . . The service was performed without either anthem or organ." In a sermon delivered in Mayfair Chapel after the Prince's demise, the most that was said for him was very paltry indeed: "He had no great parts, but he had great virtues; indeed they degenerated into vices; he was generous, but I hear his generosity has ruined a great many people; and then his condescension was such that he kept very bad company." But the unimpressive funeral cortege was hardly an index of the Prince's unpopularity, for few courtiers, secular or ecclesiastical, will pay hom-

age to the impotent dead if they gain thereby the ill-will of a living monarch.

Today Frederick is remembered only in the tragi-comic epitaph:

Here lies Fred,  
Who was alive and is dead;  
Had it been his father  
I had much rather.  
Had it been his brother  
Still better than another  
Had it been his sister,  
No one would have missed her  
Had it been the whole generation,  
Still better for the nation,  
But since 'tis only Fred,  
Who was alive and is dead,—  
There's no more to be said.

But if the world was indifferent to Frederick's passing, his son was not. When he learned the news, George "turned pale, and laid his hand on his breast. . . . 'I feel something here,' he said, 'just as I did when I saw two workmen fall from the scaffold at Kew.'" And the boy wept inconsolably for a whole day.

Frederick Louis left behind him a document entitled, "Instructions for my son George, drawn by my-Self, for His good, that of my Family and for that of His People, according to the ideas of my Grand-Father, and best Friend, George I." It was to remain in the custody of his wife Augusta, until George became of age or came to the throne; but meanwhile, she was to read it to him from time to time. In the first part of the will, Frederick assures his son, "I entertain no doubt of your good Heart, nor of Your Honour; Things I trust, you will never loose out of Sight. The perverseness and bad example of the times, I am Sure will never make You forget them. Let me add, that when mankind will once be persuaded, that You are Just, Humane, Generous, and Brave, You will be beloved, by Your People, and respected by Foreign powers." The will then counsels the Prince to obey and honor his mother and protect his brothers and sisters. It also contains political admonitions: "Employ all your hands, all your Power, to live with Oeconomy, and try never to spend more in the Year, than the Malt and two Shillings in the Land Tax. If you can do so, You will be able to reduce the National Debt, which if not done, will Surely one time or other, create

Such a disaffection, and despair, that I dread the consequences for You, My Dear Son. The sooner you have an opportunity to lower the interest, for Gods Sake do it. Let Your Treasury Speak with Firmness to the Companies and Monied Men. . . . If you can be without War, let not your Ambition draw you into it. . . . At the Same time never give up Your Honour nor that of the Nation. . . . Convince this Nation that You are not only an Englishman born and bred, but that you are also this by inclination."

The will directs the Prince to pay his father's debts, if possible, within a year of his death. It concludes with advocating the separation of Hanover and England, a principle which George I had favored. The whole document is a singular production for a man who was regarded by most of his contemporaries as little more than a wastrel and who was utterly conscienceless in regard to his debts. And though its author never lived to be a king, he did set down principles of Kingship that his posterity would have done well to follow.

Now that Frederick was out of the way, King George II took an active hand in the rearing of the boy who was to succeed him. Not as active as he would have liked, for the dogged Augusta was not relinquishing her parental control to anybody. In fact, her defiance of the sovereign earned from him the title "*cette diablesse Madame la Princesse*." He did, however, succeed in removing Francis, Lord North, a close personal friend of Frederick Louis, from the post of chief tutor, and replacing him with Simon, Lord Harcourt. A man of no great force, current gossip said of him: "He is a cipher, he must be a cipher and was put in to be a cipher."

But since the education of an heir-apparent is a matter of national significance, the appointment of Harcourt aroused widespread resentment. In December, 1752, an anonymous protest, purporting to be the "Memorial of Several Noblemen," created a tempest at Court. The Memorial, probably the work of Horace Walpole, began by stating the extreme importance to the Nation of the Prince of Wales' education. It asserted that both the good and the evil suffered under previous Monarchs was, in large measure, the result of their early education; and that "to place men about the Prince of Wales whose principles are suspected and whose beliefs in the Mysteries of our Holy Faith are doubtful has the most mischievous tendency."

Charges and counter charges were hurled back and forth. Lord Harcourt, presumably to clear himself, accused Stone, the assistant-governor in charge of young George's education, of polluting the Prince's

mind by permitting him to read such books as Père d'Orléans' *Revolutions d'Angleterre*. The accused was examined by a Cabinet Council, and exonerated; whereupon Harcourt felt himself forced to resign. The Dowager Princess Augusta was delighted. Harcourt had always resented her interference in the Prince's education, and had haughtily disregarded her opinions. Now she could mould her son in her own way.

Accordingly, Lord Waldegrave, who was then thirty-seven, unenthusiastically accepted the position of governor. "If I dared," he said, "I would make the excuse to the King, I am too young to govern and too old to be governed." The new mentor was a *bon vivant*, a man of parts, and a shrewd judge of character. Unfortunately he was not aggressive, and despite the fact that he "found His Royal Highness uncommonly full of princely prejudices contracted in the Nursery and improved by Bedchamber women and Pages of the Backstairs," he soon resigned himself to the fact that "the mother and the nursery always prevailed." Although Augusta told Bubb Dodington at this time that the children were very fond of Lord Waldegrave, many years later George looked back upon him as a "depraved and worthless man." It was indeed unfortunate that Lord Waldegrave's urbane sophistication was not more successful in competing with the smothering pedantry of the royal mother.

Probably the most brilliant member of the pedagogical staff was the clerical physiologist, Stephen Hales, who was already past seventy, and whose famous experimental work on blood pressure had been done twenty years earlier. The book which held first place in the princely education was Viscount Bolingbroke's *Idea of a Patriot King*, published when George was seventeen. It seems ironical that this essay, composed by a brilliant libertine and Jacobite, who had been exiled by the first George, and had bought his way back by giving a bribe of £12,000 to George II's mistress, should have become the political bible for this highly moral young Prince of Wales.\* Written as a political pamphlet for Frederick Louis, it advocated an impractical and almost religious political idealism. It asserted that the true Monarch should study the welfare of his people and effectuate it, completely independent of party influence and consideration. It affirmed that a limited

\*That the author did not feel high moral character essential in a Prime Minister seems apparent, for "he himself bragged that in one day he was the happiest man alive, got drunk, harangued the Queen, and at night was put to bed to a beautiful young lady, and was tuck'd up by two of the prettiest young Peers in England, Lord Jersey and Bathurst."

monarchy was the best form of government and that the ruler must himself bear a very estimable personal character.

Bolingbroke's influence can be seen in a juvenile essay on Alfred the Great that is among George's school papers at Windsor Castle: "When Alfred mounted the throne, there was scarcely a man in office that was not totally unfit for it, and generally extremely corrupt in the execution of it . . . he got rid of the incorrigible, reclaimed the others, and formed new subjects for to raise his own glory, and with it the glory and happiness of this country . . . when all this is carefully examined, we may safely affirm that no good and great Prince born in a free country and like Alfred fond of the cause of Liberty, will ever despair of restoring his country to virtue, freedom, and glory, even though he mounts the Throne in the most corrupted times, in storms of inward faction and the most threatening circumstances without." A few years were to show that George had learned his lesson well. At his accession he acted like the reincarnation of Alfred the Reformer.

Bubb Dodington asked the Dowager Princess about her son's educational progress when he was fourteen. "She said, she really did not well know what they taught him; but to speak freely, she was afraid not much." Six months later Dodington again questioned the Princess. "She said, that I knew him almost as well as she did; that he was very honest, but she wished that he was a little more forward and less childish, at his age . . . that she did not observe the Prince to take very particularly to anybody about him but his brother Edward, and she was very glad of it, for the young people of quality were so ill educated and so very vicious, that they frightened her. I told her, I thought it a great happiness that he showed no disposition to any excesses."

George seemed to have had quite ambivalent reactions toward his mother. He once told her "that he was afraid he had not behaved to her sometimes as well as he ought, and wondered how he could be so misled; to which she answered, no, but that now and then, not with so much complaisance as a young gentleman should use to a lady." Augusta was an extremely dominating and exacting parent. Her appeal to her children was emotional rather than through reason. When her children were rude to her or to one another she inquired "how they thought their father would have liked to see them behave so to anybody that belonged to him and whom he valued; and that they ought to have more kindness toward each other because they had lost their friend and protector, and she said she found that it made a proper impression on them."

George was torn between his desires to be a dutiful son and a masterful prince. His mother ordered and demanded immediate obedience. And yet he had heard forever reverberating in his ears her provoking cry, "George, be a King." When he was sixteen and a half he complained to her bitterly of "the subjection he was under." Edward, who was then fifteen, threatened open revolt and grew vehement over his brother's "want of spirit." George met his intolerable situation with periods of sulking. The absence of any frank signs of revolt on her eldest son's part led Augusta to assert her smothering domination as constantly during his adolescence as she had during his childhood. In fact, after her husband's death she could more easily rationalize the necessity for such complete control.

Augusta told Doddington that when George was eighteen years old, "he was shy and backward . . . that he was not a wild, dissipated boy, but good-natured and cheerful, with a serious cast upon the whole—that those about him knew him no more than if they had never seen him, that he was not quick but with those he was acquainted, applicable and intelligent."

At about this time George had an interview with his grandfather which burned itself into his memory. George II had very little patience with the frightened, awkward boy who was to succeed him on the throne of England, and the Prince on his side was in constant terror of his grandfather's fiery temper. One day, soon after his eighteenth birthday which marked his political coming-of-age, the King summoned young George to his private chamber. He wanted to find out what the lad knew about the history and government of England and Hanover. The Prince was unprepared for the ordeal, and whatever knowledge he had, fled at his grandfather's first word. Mercilessly the King skipped from point to point, flinging his questions. The flustered boy answered in scarcely audible monosyllables. The story is that the King was so disgusted that he slapped young George in the face—an act the Prince never forgot. The King's contempt knew no bounds. "You are only fit for reading the Bible to your mother!" he said.

The Earl of Waldegrave has drawn a brilliantly penetrating picture of Prince George at twenty, two years before he came to the throne: "His parts, though not excellent, will be found very tolerable, if they are ever properly exercised. He is strictly honest, but wants that frank and open behavior which makes honesty appear amiable. When he had a very scanty allowance, it was one of his favorite maxims that men should be just before they are generous; his income is now very con-

siderably augmented, but his generosity has not increased in equal proportion. His religion is free from all hypocrisy, but it is not of the most charitable sort; he has rather too much attention to the sins of his neighbors. He has spirit, but not of the active kind; and does not want resolution but it is mixed with too much obstinacy. He has great command of his passions, and will seldom do wrong, except when he mistakes wrong for right; but as often as this shall happen, it will be difficult to undeceive him because he is uncommonly indolent, and has strong prejudices. His want of application and aversion to business would be far less dangerous, was he eager in the pursuit of pleasure; for the transition from pleasure to business is both shorter and easier than from a state of total inaction. He has a kind of unhappiness in his temper, which, if it be not conquered before it has taken too deep a root, will be a source of frequent anxiety. Whenever he is displeased, his anger does not break out with heat and violence; but he becomes sullen and silent, and retires to his closet; not to compose his mind by study or contemplation, but merely to indulge in the melancholy enjoyment of his own ill humor. Even when the fit is ended, unfavorable symptoms very frequently return, which indicate that on certain occasions his Royal Highness has too correct a memory."

This prophetic paragraph has great significance. Here we have the picture of a prince of twenty showing a striking degree of emotional infantilism—a sullen child, sulking in the corner, sucking his thumb. Clinically, we know that such individuals are peculiarly liable to profound emotional upsets, often developing into frank mental disorders. It is my impression that there is a special group among the cases of manic-depressive insanity composed of over-mothered sons who have been too much protected and dominated, and have been allowed to indulge too freely in their own emotions—a sort of emotional self-abuse. Their attacks\* are induced by relatively weak stimuli, and though they are usually of short duration, they recur at frequent intervals.

\*Many young people with morbid mental attitudes have been able to salvage themselves. This was the experience of William James. As a youth, he permitted himself to ruminate constantly on the insecurity of life, finally becoming panic-stricken and obsessed for a long time with the desire to commit suicide. According to him, in some rather mysterious way, he was cured by a conscious and sudden shift of emphasis. The very insecurity of life became a stimulating and revivifying challenge that exhilarated him.



### CHAPTER III



*"For though I act wrong in most things, yet I have too much spirit to accept the Crown and be a Cypher."*

GEORGE III TO LORD BUTE

THERE CAN BE little doubt that George had a tortured adolescence. In his fervid and intimate correspondence with the Earl of Bute, we see the self-portrait of an idealistic youth, harassed by profound feelings of inadequacy and terrified by the role for which destiny had cast him. Not yet emotionally weaned from his mother, he shared her complete distrust of her fellow men. Miserable, he struggled against the sudden thrust of sexual pressure that develops in adolescence. And he felt spasmodically the powerful urge so characteristic of this period, to emancipate himself from parental domination. Toward the end of his prolonged adolescence, his relationship with his mother seems for a time to have reached the breaking-point. Instead of meeting her constant domination with a smouldering resentment, he flared up in sudden bursts of temper. His temper reactions were probably an indication of his increasing dissatisfaction with himself at his inability to break the chafing bonds which held him to his mother.

Augusta had played her game with rare, instinctive skill. She had undermined her son's faith in every one else. Yet he was growing too old to be seen following his mother at every step. To whom could he turn? Only to the Earl of Bute, a pompous, hypocritical, and romantic Scot twenty-five years his senior who had become his mother's devoted friend. Just as Augusta desired, George developed an overwhelming love for the man who was most closely identified with her.

It was a strange quirk of fate that had miscast John Stuart, the third Earl of Bute, as a moldier of kings instead of an arbiter of fashions, a part for which he was admirably suited. It happened that Prince Frederick, on an afternoon four years before his death, drove from Clinden

to the Egham races. A sudden shower came up and his Royal Highness sought shelter in a tent. Time dragged heavily and whist was proposed, but there was one hand short. Scouts were deployed to find a subject of sufficiently noble station to play with the first Prince of the Blood. The Earl of Bute, a member of one of Scotland's most eminent families, was discovered in the carriage of an apothecary. The Prince immediately liked him. They found mutual interests other than cards and horses. The Earl had a flair for literature and, in consequence, could appreciate the Prince's productions. He had taken leading romantic roles in the Duchess of Queensbury's amateur theatricals; so they talked of plays and players as they drove away together.\* Bute had already achieved an important place in the social life of London for his ability to devise ingenious costumes for masquerades. In 1736 he had eloped with the daughter of the rich and notably intelligent Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. He was a dabbler in the sciences as well as in the arts. John Hunter had in his great museum a "splendid but unfinished Air Pump, invented by the Earl of Bute."

The men of real parts who were his contemporaries have left rather unflattering pictures of him. Chesterfield says that his "natural temper was dry, unconciliatory and sullen, with a great mixture of pride. He never looked at those he spoke to, or who spoke to him." Waldegrave, who was jealous of him, and doubtless a prejudiced observer, said that he had "a good person, fine legs, and a theatrical air of great importance. There is an extraordinary appearance of wisdom, both in his look and manner of speaking; for whether the subject be serious or trifling, he is equally pompous, slow, and sententious. Not contented with being wise, he would be thought a polite scholar, and a man of great erudition: but has the misfortune never to succeed, except with those who are exceedingly ignorant: for his historical knowledge is chiefly taken from tragedies, wherein he is very deeply read: and his classical learning extends no farther than a French translation." According to Shelburne, "he had a gloomy sort of madness which made him affect living alone, particularly in Scotland, where he resided some years in the Isle of Bute, with as much pomp and as much uncomfortableness in his little domestick circle as if he had been king of the island, Lady Bute a forlorn queen, and her children slaves of a despotick tyrant."

\*Another source states that Bute and Prince Frederick met at the cricket match at Richmond in 1747.

But both Frederick and Augusta were immediately charmed with their new courtier. In a short time he became a favorite. Frederick was carrying on an affair with Lady Middlesex at the time, so that he purposely threw Augusta and Bute together. Before his death Prince Frederick tired of his Scotch Earl. Possibly, like many philanderers, he found himself jealous of his wife's new-formed interest. He spoke of Bute as "a fine showy man, who would make an excellent ambassador in a court where there was no business." But destiny awarded Bute a far more important post. After Frederick's death he became the chief consoler of the Princess and the counsellor of the young Prince.

The Earl of Bute's entrance into politics had been by the backstairs, which had led to the royal nursery and, as many suspected, also to the bedroom of the Princess. The people of the time were not prudish\* and they were accustomed to expect moral laxness in noble and royal circles; but they looked with bitter suspicion on those who owed their political power to such connections. Had the Dowager Princess been beloved the popular attitude might have been tempered. As a matter of fact, she was one of the most bitterly hated women in England, and her control of her son was strongly resented. When George would make his nightly visits to his mother there would come from the obscuring darkness such derisive inquiries as, "Are you going to suck?" Some years later, when Princess Augusta left to visit Germany, street crowds sang a ballad "the burthen of which was the cow has left her calf."

The combination of the two, Bute and Augusta, was more than the people would stomach. Contemporary chroniclers were nearly unanimous in the view that the Dowager Princess of Wales and the Earl of Bute were lovers. Shelburne, Wraxall, Walpole, and Waldegrave said so in no uncertain terms. "I am as much convinced of the amorous connection between Bute and the Dowager as if I had seen them together," wrote Walpole. Waldegrave slyly observed that although the Prince, before his death, had come to think little of the Earl's attainments, ". . . the sagacity of the Princess Dowager discovered other accomplishments, of which the Prince, her husband, may not perhaps

\*The eighteenth century was a period marked by a great tolerance of personal behavior. Erasmus Darwin publicly acknowledged the illegitimacy of his daughters and they married well. Sir Edward Walpole's three illegitimate daughters by a former brothel inmate married the Bishop of Exeter, brother of the Earl of Albemarle; Lionel, the fourth Earl of Dysart; and William, the Duke of Gloucester and brother of George III.

have been the most competent to judge.”\* There was a story current at the Court that when the Princess Dowager reproved one of her ladies-in-waiting, Miss Chudleigh, for an amatory escapade, she retorted, “Votre Altesse Royale sait que chacune a son But.”

Whether such an intimacy existed is, of course, of little historical consequence. That the people of England, from chimney-sweeps to peers, then thought so is important.† It would be difficult to imagine the pain that popular aspersions, cast on the relationship of his beloved mother to his revered mentor, gave the prudish and sensitive young George. But he was so naïve that he was able to convince himself that they were being maligned for political purposes. Furthermore, Bute, in his frank avowals of affection for the Princess, was remarkably disarming. In one of his early letters to Prince George, he wrote, “It will sooner or later be whispered in your ear, don’t you know Lord Bute was your father’s friend and is strongly attached to the Princess, he only means to bring you under your mother’s government, sure you are too much a man to bear that—Hear Sir, what Lord Bute will say—I glory in my attachment to the Princess, in being called your father’s friend, but I glory in being yours too.”

The letters which Prince George wrote to Bute, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, are remarkable documents. In analyzing them one must realize that they were in response to the noble Earl’s florid, sententious epistles, which were saturated with religious humiliation. In consequence, the youth’s professions of guilt do not represent the same degree of morbidity that they would otherwise indicate. Although Prince George presented in these letters many symptoms of psychiatric depression, it seems improbable that the Prince was then suffering from such an illness. Had the letters all been written during a circumscribed period, the existence of such a disorder would seem more probable; but these letters extend over a period of three years. Apparently they were the outpourings of an adolescent harassed by inward conflicts and feelings of inferiority.

In a letter written when he was just eighteen—at a time when he and

\*One of the few letters from Augusta to Bute that has been published concludes: “Ld. Bute forbids his best friend to speak what she feels, but he must allow her to be grateful.”

†Fifty years later the scandal-loving Queen Caroline, the wife of Augusta’s grandson George IV, in her conversation with Lord Glenbervie went so far as to claim that “. . . the Queen of Denmark who came after the Prince’s [Frederick Louis] death, was a daughter of Lord Bute’s.”

his mother were trying desperately to have the Earl of Bute appointed Groom of the Stole, the post of official guide to the Prince of Wales—George said, “It is very true that the Ministers have done everything they can to provoke me, that they have called me a harmless boy, and have not even deigned to give me an answer when I so earnestly wish to see my friend about me. They have also treated my Mother in a cruel manner (which I shall neither forget nor forgive to the day of my death) because she is so good as to come forward and to preserve her son from the many snares that surround him. My Friend is also attacked in the most cruel and horrid manner, not for anything he has done against them, but because he is my Friend, and wants to see me come to the Throne with honor and not with disgrace and because he is a friend to the blessed liberties of his country and not to arbitrary notions. I look upon myself as engaged in honor and justice to defend these my two Friends as long as I draw breath. I do therefore here in presence of Our Almighty Lord promise, that I will ever remember the insults done to my Mother, and never will forgive anyone who shall offer to speak disrespectfully of her. . . . I will take upon me the man in everything, and will not show that indifference which I have as yet too often done. As I have chosen the vigorous part, I will throw off that indolence which if I don’t soon get the better of will be my ruin and will never grow weary of this, though —— [George II] should live many years. . . . I know few things I ought to be more thankful for to the Great Power above, than for its having pleased him to send you to help and advise me in these difficult times. . . . I have often heard you say that you don’t think I shall have the same friendship for you when I am married as I now have. I shall never change in that. . . .”

Two weeks later he writes, “The longer I live the more I shall see how little any trust can be placed in most men except yourself.” Again, he castigates himself before his beloved mentor: “I am conscious of my own indolence, which none but so sincere a friend as you could have borne with. I do here in the most solemn manner declare that I will entirely throw aside this my greatest enemy and that you shall instantly find a change; my negligence, which I reckon as belonging to indolence, is very great, but shall absolutely be forever laid away. I will employ all my time upon business, and will be able for the future to give an account of everything I read. . . . I do now here tell you that I am resolved in myself to take the resolute part, to act the man in everything, to repeat whatever I am to say with spirit and not blushing and afraid

as I have hitherto; I will also never show the least irresolution, and will not from being warm on any subject, by degrees grow quite indifferent about it, in short my conduct shall convince you that I am mortified at what I have done, and that I despise myself as everybody else must, that knows how I have acted; I hope that by altering now, I shall be able to regain your opinion, which I value above everything in this world. I will by my behavior show that I know, if I in the least deviate from what I here promise and declare, I shall lose the greatest of stakes, my Crown, and what I esteem far beyond that, my Friend." Again he writes, "I own I am of such an unhappy nature that if I cannot in a good measure alter that, let me be ever so learned in what it is necessary for a King to know, I shall make but a very poor and despicable figure."

In a letter to Bute written when he was twenty, he says that the many truths he has told him "have set me in a most dreadful light before my own eyes; I see plainly that I have been my greatest enemy; for had I always acted according to your advice, I should now have been the direct opposite from what I am. . . . If you should now resolve to set me adrift; I could not obraid you, but on the contrary look on it as a natural consequence of my faults, and not want of friendship in you. I say if you ever think fit to take this step, my line of action is plain; for though I act wrong in most things, yet I have too much spirit to accept the Crown and be a Cypher, and too much love for my countrymen to want this Throne and be their detestation; I would therefore in such an unhappy case retire to some distant region where in solitude I might for the rest of my life remain, and think on the various faults I have committed that I might repent of them."

When George was twenty-one, he wrote to his counsellor of his conflicts over sex: "You have often accused me of growing grave and thoughtful, it is entirely owing to a daily increasing admiration of the fair sex, which I am attempting with all the philosophy and resolution I am capable of to keep under; I should be ashamed after having so long resisted the charms of these divine creatures now to become their prey; Princes when once in their hands make miserable figures, the annals of France and the present situation of Government in the Kingdom I most love,\* are convincing proofs of; when I have said this you

\*The control of his grandfather, George II, by his mistress, Lady Yarmouth. Prince George seems to have exaggerated this; in the light of history, she does not appear to have seriously affected the political policies of the monarch.

will plainly feel how strong a struggle there is between the boiling youth of twenty-one years and prudence; the last I hope will ever keep the upper hand; indeed if I can weather it but a few years marriage will put a stop of this combat in my breast."

This last letter is of importance in the consideration of the bewildering stories of Prince George's morganatic marriage. In 1776 *The Citizen*, one of the many scandal sheets then flourishing, referred to George III's marriage, when he was fifteen, to a very beautiful Yorkshire Quakeress, Hannah Lightfoot. This story was revived shortly after the Monarch's death by *The Monthly Magazine* and was subsequently accepted by several biographers. The accounts differ in detail. That Elizabeth Chudleigh, the notorious Maid of Honor to Augusta, who bigamously married the Duke of Kingston, served as the procuress seems generally agreed.\* By some, William Pitt is reported to have been one of the official witnesses of George's childhood marriage. There is disagreement as to who performed the ceremony. Some state that it was done by Doctor James Wilmot, D.D., Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. Others yield the honors to the notorious Rev. Alexander Keith of Curzon Street, the prime performer in the Mayfair Marriage Mart.† Had such a morganatic union been contracted, its offspring would have been entitled to succession, as the Royal Marriage Act was not passed until 1772.

One account concludes this romantic tale suddenly and not too glamorously, stating that in 1754 Hannah contracted a marriage with Isaac Axelford and then went to Hanover to live. A completely different version of the story of the morganatic marriage recounts that it occurred when George was twenty-one. This is given a semblance of credibility by an unsigned letter included in the "Official Correspondence of the 2nd Earl of Liverpool [The Prime Minister], December, 1819 to 9th February, 1820," in the British Museum: "Among the papers entrusted to the Care of Late Earl of Warwick by Doctor Wilmot there is a very important Document. . . . Mr. Dickinson . . . has used all Endeavour to prevent its being made publick. The Document alluded to is a Certificate of a private and a legal Marriage of the Late King's when Prince

\*It is said that once, while protesting to the Earl of Chesterfield her innocence of slander, Miss Chudleigh said that her calumniators had gone the length of accusing her of having born bastard twins. The noble Earl replied, "Tut, tut, good lady, I never believe more than half of what I hear."

†In Parliament it was stated that he married 6000 couples a year and reached the astounding record of 173 marriages in a day.

of Wales in the year 1759—at which Mr. Pitt and others were present and it was subsequently witnessed by Mr. Pitt when created a peer. The King had a son and a daughter by this wife. The son is living but the daughter died two years ago. The validity of this certificate is strongly corroborated by letters and other Circumstances which give an Air of More than Probability to it.” After very careful investigation this document was considered fraudulent.

Whether Hannah Lightfoot was even known to George III is still uncertain; that no marriage was ever contracted by them seems quite certain. George was so immature a youth that the idea of his marrying when less than fifteen seems preposterous. Had George married her, it would have been only at this early age since there is evidence that she married Axelford in 1754. That William Pitt would have been an official witness at any time to such an unnatural and politically inexpedient union is utterly incredible. The fact that Horace Walpole fails anywhere to mention a morganatic marriage speaks very strongly against its existence. There are, however, several entries in the diary kept during George III's 1788 psychosis by the King's equerry, Robert Fulke Greville, that can only be understood if interpreted as guarded references to an earlier romantic interest of the King in some Quakeress.

Augusta's effective domination of her son thwarted George II's attempt to have him royally married at seventeen. The petty marital schemes of both the King and his daughter-in-law were ludicrous. The King, realizing that Augusta was planning to have one of her distant kinswomen from Saxe-Gotha eventually made the Queen of England, promptly countered with the proposal that a princess from his beloved Hanover be chosen. He had imported for inspection two daughters of the Duchess of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel. He was so taken with the older princess that he declared that were he in his fifties instead of his seventies, she would not have to wait until his death to become Queen of England. The Dowager Princess was not even consulted by the King in this matter. Indignant, she built up a good case for herself. Augusta confided to Dodington “that she had eight other children to be provided for; that she hoped he [George II] would think of doing for them, and not leave her eldest son eight young children to take care of before he had one of his own; that it was probable the prince might have so many, that hers could not expect much provision. . . . She thought the match premature; the prince ought to mix with the world—the marriage would prevent it, he was shy and backward, the match



would shut him up forever with two or three friends of his, and so many of hers . . . that the young woman was said to be handsome, and had all good qualities, and an abundance of wit, etc., but if she took after her mother, she will never do here . . . her mother is the most satirical, sarcastical person in the world, and will always sew mischief whenever she comes. Such a character would not do with George." Like many mothers faced with the problem of a son's marriage, she skirted about the real issues—the fact that this marriage would weaken her emotional bonds with her son, and transfer the controlling power to George II and an ambitious mother-in-law.

"The Prince of Wales," Waldegrave said, "was taught to believe that he was to be made a sacrifice, merely to gratify the King's private interest in the electorate of Hanover. The young princess was most cruelly misrepresented; many even of her perfections were aggravated into faults;—His Royal Highness implicitly believing every idle tale and improbable aspersion, till his prejudice against her amounted to aversion itself." Horace Walpole put it succinctly when he said that George "declared violently against being bewofenbüttled." The whole affair made so deep an impression on the Prince that four years later he wrote, in answer to the Earl of Bute's suggestion that he marry, "I can never agree to alter my situation whilst this old man [George II] lives; I will rather undergo anything ever so disagreeable than put my trust in him for a single moment in an affair of such delicacy."

During his eighteenth year George became deeply enamored of the Lady Elizabeth Spencer, the beautiful and stately daughter of the third Duke of Marlborough. Shortly thereafter she was married to Henry Herbert, the 10th Earl of Pembroke. Six years after the marriage the Earl, disguised as a sailor, ran off with Miss Hunt, a great beauty. This ill treatment which the Countess received at the hands of her Lord was probably the psychological force which made it possible for so conventionally moral a man as George III to maintain his affectionate interest in her. Ladies in distress had an especial appeal for him. The remarkable depth of George's love for the Countess of Pembroke was demonstrated by its persistence until death, at eighty-two. At the periods when he became insane, and prohibitions and inhibitions were thrown off, he repeatedly protested his love for his "Eliza." He frequently believed himself divorced from his Queen and united with her. An authentic diary of the final illness records that on March 31, 1811, "in the presence of Sir Henry Halford he said he had sworn five times

on the Bible to be faithful to his dear Eliza who had been faithful to him for fifty-five years." Sir Henry was told that "he had drunk the health of 'Sanctissima Mea Uxor Elizabetha,' and formed the idea of becoming a Lutheran which was necessary to the left-handed marriage."

On George's eighteenth birthday, the King once more made a great effort to detach him from his mother. The allurements this time were not a princess, but an income of £40,000 a year and the proffer of apartments in St. James's and in Kensington Palace. But Augusta was able to keep the apron-string intact. The Prince accepted the offer of the income but wrote, "I hope that I shall not be thought wanting in the duty I owe your Majesty, if I humbly continue to entreat your Majesty's permission to remain with the Princess my mother; this point is too great consequence to my happiness for me not to wish ardently your Majesty's favour and indulgence in it." In the same letter he begged the King to appoint the Earl of Bute Groom of the Stole, a post which George II had already offered the Earl of Waldegrave. The King was disgusted. His chief advisers, Newcastle\* and Fox, perceiving his increasing infirmities, and being remarkably adroit politicians, persuaded him to yield grudgingly on every point. He refused to present personally the gold key, the badge of the office of Groom of the Stole, to Bute, but gave it to the Duke of Grafton, who slipped it into the Earl's pocket and told him not to resent the affront. When the Earl kissed the Monarch's hand in recognition of his appointment, the King did not say a word to him.

The Earl of Bute considered his place in the Prince's household no sinecure and threw himself into his task wholeheartedly. He and his disciple read together from the works of Shakespeare; there were serious courses in history and political science, punctuated by weekly examinations. Despite the fact that Bute and Prince George were together nearly every day there were frequent exchanges of letters, in which the Groom of the Stole admonished his pupil, and the Prince regularly pleaded guilty, promising to mend his ways, and begging his revered mentor not to withdraw his love. George developed a real infatuation for Bute. He often concluded his letters with noble avowals of affection such as, "yours till death separates us." From their correspondence it

\*Chesterfield urged continually upon Newcastle that "Leicester House was to be gained at all hazards, and all prices—the influences of the young court, will gather new strength every month after seventy-four." (George II's approaching birthday.)

is apparent that at the beginning of his association with Bute, Prince George had decided to make him his first Minister as soon after he became King as possible. He assured him that no change of fortune, not even marriage, could weaken their bonds. He was convinced that both the nation and himself would be plunged into ruin if Bute were not there to guide him. His subjugation was absolute and complete.

Bute periodically made hollow protestations of his unfitness and his dislike for assuming the leadership of a Ministry. These evoked frantic wails from the young Prince. ". . . Through my own indolence of temper," he wrote when he was twenty, "I have not that degree of knowledge and experience in business one of my age might reasonably have acquired, therefore if I should mount the throne without the assistance of a friend I shall undoubtedly be in the most dreadful of situations."

## CHAPTER IV



*"He cannot be so unfeeling, so avaricious, or so German, as his grandfather."*

H. WALPOLE

EARLY IN THE MORNING of October 25, 1760, the young Prince of Wales was enjoying a gallop through the sleeping countryside. The air was crisp and cool; no sound disturbed his wandering thoughts. Suddenly, as he approached Six Milestone from Kew Bridge, he was startled by the clatter of approaching hooves. A courier drew up beside him and handed him a piece of brown paper, which he scanned hastily. His grandfather, the King, had met with an accident. The Prince wheeled his horse about and returned posthaste to Kew. As he dismounted, he declared to the stable grooms, "I have said this horse is lame, and you are to say nothing to the contrary if you value your employments." By nine, a message arrived from his aunt Amelia announcing the death of George II.\* At ten the great Pitt, with his gorgeous blue and silver equipage, arrived to give official notice to the Prince that he was King, and to learn his new master's will. But George III did not know his own will. Immediately, he set out by a back road for Lord Bute's home, to have his will moulded for him.

From the outset, the twenty-two-year-old King conducted himself with frankness and decorum. He promptly added 2000 guineas from his own pocket to the 6000 he found in an envelope in the late King's desk

\*Horace Walpole gives this account of the King's rather ignominious death:

"On Friday night the King went to bed in perfect health and rose so the next morning at his usual hour of six. He called for and drank his chocolate. At seven, for everything with him was exact and periodic, he went into the closet to dismiss the chocolate. Coming from there his valet de chambre heard a noise, waited a moment and heard something like a groan."

Walpole's statement that death was due to a rupture of the left ventricle of the heart has been accepted by most medical authorities. However, Doctor Messenger Monsey, a prominent London physician, stated in a letter that death resulted from a ruptured aneurysm of the aorta.

addressed to his mistress, Lady Yarmouth. Mr. Pitt was at first ordered to summon the Privy Council to meet at Savile House, but the King had the place of meeting changed to Leicester House, where his mother resided. Before the meeting, the Duke of Newcastle, who had faithfully served both the King's grandfather and his great-grandfather, paid his respects. After assuring the Duke of his cordiality, George said suddenly, "My Lord Bute is your good friend; he will tell you my thoughts." The aged Duke, a staunch Whig, felt no friendliness for Bute, the young Tory Scot. He knew that this generous declaration foretold him no good.

The course of the future grew clearly discernible during the first week. The war party, the Whig oligarchy, and the dissolute court set were to be supplanted. A conundrum propounded by the wife of a physician named Hardinge was on every one's tongue: What kind of coal was the King to burn in his chamber—Scotch coal, Newcastle coal, or Pitt coal? The answer was clear to see. Bute, the Scotchman, was first in the royal favor.

In England during the eighteenth century the Scotch were still considered an alien people. The social and cultural leaders felt less sympathy for their fellow-nationals from the north than for the French, with whom they were at war for more than forty years during the century.\* Those who migrated to London formed a capable, ambitious, proud, frugal, and close-knit group. Many of them became greatly respected, particularly in the professions; but few were beloved, and Bute had none of the personality traits that would make him so.

Nonetheless, the King loved and respected him, and set him up over all his other advisers, even the great Pitt. Contrary to the precedent established by his great-grandfather and grandfather, George III did not call upon his first minister for a speech to read at the Council on the first day of the reign, but allowed Bute to compose the address for him. And the speech he delivered to Parliament on November 18 was drafted not by Pitt but by Lord Hardwicke. The new King stigmatized the successful war Pitt was conducting against France as a "bloody

\*The distrust of the Scotch and the English was mutual. Lord Brougham says that when he gave his lecture fee to Professor Black, the great chemist of the University of Edinburgh weighed the guineas on his scale with the explanation: "I am obliged to weigh when strange students come, there being a very large number who bring light guineas." When the Scot, Howe, wrote his great success *The Fatal Discovery*, the shrewd Garrick would not reveal the author's name, but induced a young Oxford Englishman to father it.

war." Pitt insisted that the phrase "bloody war" be changed to "expensive but just and necessary war." And though George III gave in on this point, he wrote Bute that he had been "very adverse" to changing the phrase.

In this speech the King had interpolated in his own writing, "Born and Educated in this Country, I glory in the name of Britain." It was said that at first George III had written, "I glory in the name of Englishman," but the Earl of Bute had changed the word Englishman to "Briton"; and the King had compromised by substituting the more general term, "Britain." To our eyes, the change may seem petty, but at that moment it was regarded as significant. The speech was criticized as showing Bute's influence. Some contemporaries even claimed that the new King spoke with traces of a Scottish accent.\* And nine years later, the famous Junius wrote, in reference to George's first important speech, "When you affectedly renounced the name of Englishman, believe me, Sir you were persuaded to pay a very ill-judged compliment to one part of your subjects, at the expense of another."

Yet despite forebodings regarding Bute's influence, England seems to have been immediately taken with its new George. His appearance was universally admired. Although he had the prominent gray eyes, the generous nose, and the full-lipped mouth common to his Hanoverian predecessors, he was, unlike them, tall, well built, with fair skin, high coloring, and fine teeth. The future looked fair indeed. As Lord Hardwicke declared, "There is now no revisionary resource. Instead of an old King and a young successor, a young healthy King and no successor in view." For George III had no mature heir who could build up an opposition party.

"The young King has all the appearance of being amiable," Horace Walpole reported a week after the accession. "There is great grace to temper much dignity and extreme good nature which breaks out on all occasions. He has shown neither inveteracy nor malice—in short we must have gained—he cannot be so unfeeling, so avaricious, or so German, as his grandfather." A little later he wrote, "I saw him yesterday, and was surprised to find the levee room had lost so entirely the air of the lion's den. The sovereign does not stand in one spot with his eyes fixed royally on the ground, and dropping bits of German news.

\*Just as, in our own time, many people claimed to have detected an American accent in Edward VIII's first radio broadcast,—ascribed, of course, to the influence of the American woman who was to become his wife.

He walks about and speaks freely to everybody. I saw him afterwards on the Throne, where he is graceful and genteel, and sits with dignity and reads his answers to addresses well."

"The King seems resolved to bring all things back to their original principles, and to stop the torrent of corruption, and laziness," Laurence Sterne wrote at Christmas. "He rises every morning at six to do business—rides out at eight to a minute, returns at nine to give himself up to his people. . . . The King gives everything himself, knows everything, and weighs everything maturely, and then is inflexible. This puts old stagers off their game. How it will end we are all in the dark."

In the following month Sterne reported, "The King wins every day upon the people, shows himself much at the play (but not at opera), rides out with his brothers every morning." This sudden metamorphosis from the self-deprecatory, shy, indecisive youth of two years before is almost as marvellous as the evolution of the butterfly.

Never did a King ascend a throne with higher purposes nor with nobler resolves. In the years preceding his accession he had faithfully labored over Bolinbroke's *Idea of a Patriot King* with his beloved mentor, the Earl of Bute. He had also read with him Blackstone's *Commentaries*, then in manuscript, with its Tory conception of the Kingship and its beatification of the English Constitution. He began his task with inspired ideals. In the first sermon after the accession, in St. James's Chapel, the Rev. Doctor Wilson exalted the new ruler, with extravagant praise; whereupon George III told Wilson that he came to hear God praised, and not himself. He voluntarily consented to have Parliament exercise the control of his personal expenditures in return for a civil list of £800,000 a year. By breaking with the practice of requiring judges to resign on the King's death, which had been followed since the Revolution of 1688, he indicated that his interest was in sound government rather than in politics. He also had a statute passed granting judges life-tenure of office.\*

A month after George III's accession, the Court announced that there would be no money available for the forthcoming election. The idealistic young King believed that a Parliament which had been nourished by Newcastle's secret service fund of £40,000 a year could be elected

\*It is noteworthy that despite George III's later efforts to control and dominate all departments of the government, at no time did he in any way interfere with or attempt to influence the judiciary.

and controlled without recourse to bribery. But by spring, when the election took place, Bute apparently had convinced George of the necessity of following the old, corrupt pattern, narcotizing him with the age-old doctrine that good ends justify evil means. ". . . For the expense is terrible," wrote Horace Walpole in March. "Corruption now stands upon its own legs, no money is issued for the Treasury; there are no parties, no pretence of grievances, yet venality is greater than ever!"

From the very beginning of his reign then, George III's personal ideals were in conflict with the conventional prerogatives of his office. He had the sexual drive normal to a man of his years, but his rigid conscience forbade him to find the easy outlets, or make the cynical compromises which most men in his position would have accepted without question. Moreover, as King, he felt that one of his first duties was to produce an heir to succeed him. He was determined to take a Queen before his coronation.

In the spring following his accession he found himself fascinated by Lady Sarah Lennox, one of the loveliest young girls in England's inner circle. She was herself of royal descent, the great-granddaughter of Charles II through his illicit union with Louise de Querouaille. Lady Sarah had first come to George's notice two years before, when she appeared at George II's court after having lived for some time in Ireland. On that occasion the monarch, displaying a type of sadistic behavior not uncommonly observed in mature men toward beautiful young girls, teased her as though she were a child of five rather than a girl of thirteen. She made her resentment quite evident; whereupon the King exclaimed aloud, "Pooh, she's grown quite stupid." The Prince immediately felt a great sympathy and kinship for this beautiful and charming child. Later he was one of the audience that saw her play the part of the heroine in Rowe's "Jane Shore." "No Magdalen by Corregio was half so lovely or expressive," said Horace Walpole. And the young prince echoed his sentiments.

George III had his first private conversation with Lady Sarah at the small Twelfth Night Ball given at St. James's in 1761, and he was charmed by her pert courage. He asked her if she did not believe that children should be governed by their parents. "Yes, sometimes," she replied with spirit, "but a German woman is not the person to govern a King of England." The self-conscious young King was an awkward lover. It was a role in which he had had neither training nor experi-



ence. Moreover, he realized that this passion for his fair subject would be opposed by his nursery-room councillors. Although he had the will to cast off his swaddling clothes, he lacked the courage to do so. A half-hearted proposal of marriage was delivered to Lady Susan Strangeways, Lady Sarah's cousin, to be relayed to his beloved. The next time he saw Lady Sarah at court he inquired what she thought of his message. "Nothing, Sir," was her unequivocal reply. As the King turned away, he murmured sadly, "Nothing comes of nothing."

This amazing invitation to become Queen of England came to spirited Lady Sarah at an inopportune time. She was then in the process of discovering her great powers as a fascinating woman, and was busy disrupting a romance between Lady Caroline Russell and her sophisticated young lover, Lord Newbattle. In the excitement of her conquest, Lady Sarah let herself be found indiscreetly riding out with this young wit, whose reputation was not of the best. Harbingers of such news were not wanting at Court. In March, 1761, she fell from her horse while following the hounds in Somersetshire and fractured her leg. Her romantic absorption in Lord Newbattle was miraculously dispelled when he sent her a message, saying that she should not worry, because her legs weren't very pretty anyhow.

The King, on the other hand, showed the tenderest interest in her condition. When she returned to Court in early spring, his joy was evident. He asked her to reconsider their former conversation and this time she accepted the proposal. He immediately grew terrified at his own audacity. He had taken the momentous step without consulting the Earl of Bute, his "dearest friend." He sought his mentor at his mother's house and, not finding him there, he wrote him for advice. He began his letter with an apology, "If I say things you think improper, impute them to the violence of my love." He continues, "I did not write this morning expecting any alleviation to my present misery except that of opening my soul to a sincere friend; but finding my melancholy increases and feeling culpable in having kept you so long in the dark, I resolv'd to acquaint you with it, who I am sure will pity me.

"What I now lay before you I never intend to communicate to any one; the truth is the D. of Richmond's sister arriv'd from Ireland towards the middle of Novr., I was struck with her first appearance at St. James's, my passion has been encreas'd every time I have since beheld her; her voice is sweet she seems sensible has a thorough sense

of her obligations to her sister Lady Kildare, in short she is every thing I can form to myself lovely.

"I am daily grown unhappy, sleep has left me, which never was before interrupted by any reverse of fortune; I protest before God I never have had any improper thought with regard to her; I don't deny having often flatter'd myself with hopes that one day or other you would consent to my raising her to a Throne; thus I mince nothing to you; the other day I heard it suggested as if the D. of Marlborough made up to her. I shift'd my grief till retired to my chamber where I remained for several hours in the depth of despair, I believe this was said without foundation at least I will flatter myself so.

"Having now laid the whole before you I submit my happiness to you who are the best of friends, whose friendship I value if possible above my love for the most charming of her sex; if you can give me no hopes how to be happy I surrender my fortune into your hands, and will keep my thoughts even from the dear object of my love, grieve in silence, and never trouble you more with this unhappy tale; for if I must either lose my friend or my love, I will give up the latter, for I esteem your friendship above every earthly joy; if on the contrary you can devise any method for my keeping my love without forfeiting your friendship, I shall be more bound to you than ever, and shall thank Heaven for the thought of writing to you on this subject.

"On the whole let me preserve your friendship, and tho' my heart should break, I shall have the happy reflexion in dying that I have not been altogether unworthy of the best of friends tho' unfortunate in other things.

"Pray let me have a line from you to night."\*

The political pot began to seethe. The Princess Dowager Augusta, the Earl of Bute, and the King's sister, later Duchess of Brunswick, joined in violent opposition. Augusta was particularly vehement because Lady Sarah's sister was married to Henry Fox, who four years before had advised George II to persuade his grandson, George, to leave his mother and establish his own household. A union with Fox's sister-in-law would not only wean George from her but would alienate him from the Earl of Bute and place him under the domination of one of the cleverest, most forceful and selfish men in England. The Princess and her noble friend could not allow such poachers on their

\*Sedgwick groups this letter among those written before the Accession. I believe it was written in 1761. M. S. G.



Augusta  
Mother of George III



John Stuart  
Earl of Bute



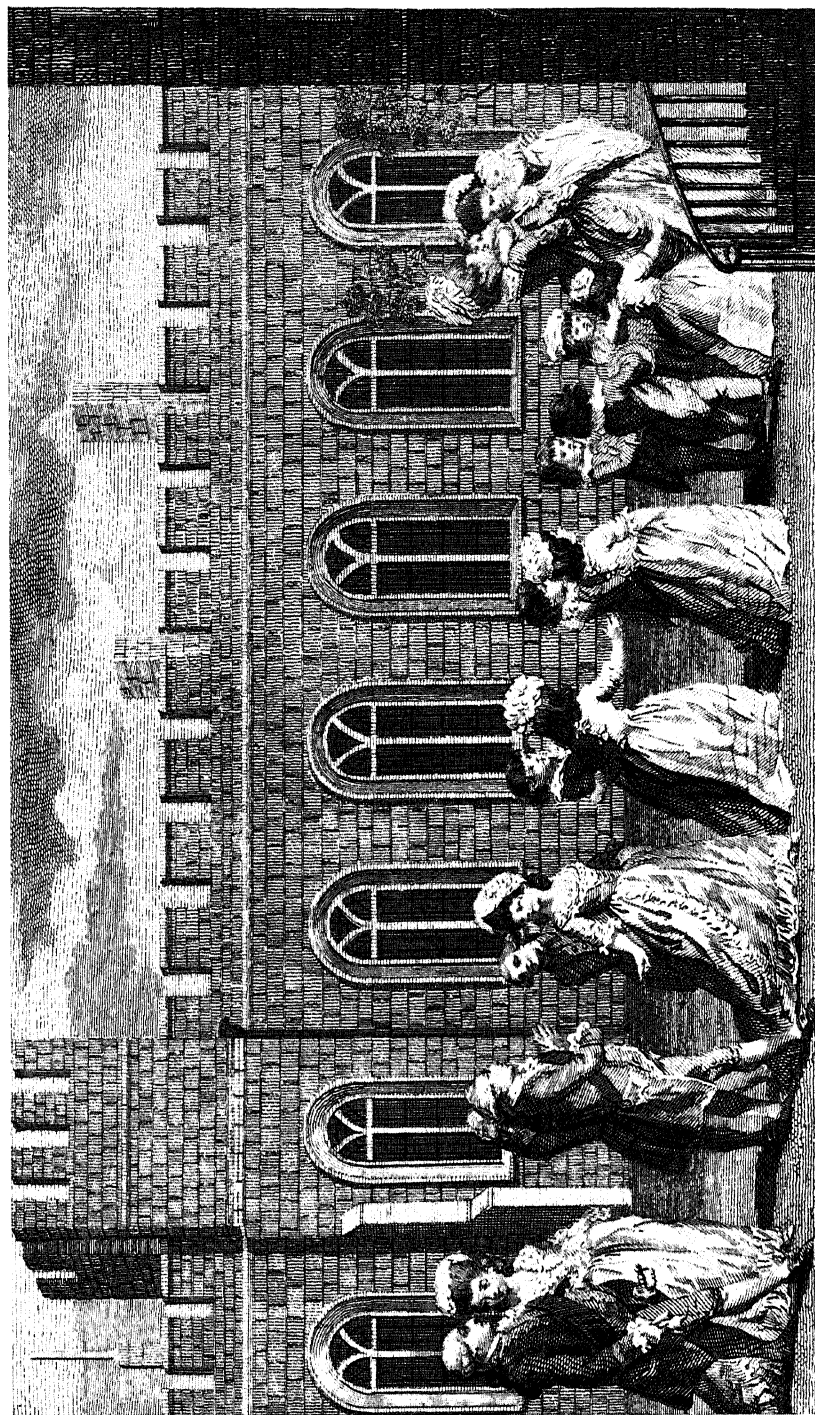
Frederick Louis  
Father of George III



George III  
At eleven years



George III  
As Prince of Wales



George III and Queen Charlotte and their fourteen children parading before the public  
at Windsor Castle in 1781

royal preserve. Bute earnestly set to work upon the King, stressing the disastrous effect which his marriage to Lady Sarah would have on his devoted mother's health. Bute told George that he would feel comfortable only with some German Princess as his wife—perhaps one of his mother's relations. The King's original determination wilted before these urgent emotional appeals. He found himself confused and frightened. He hastened to write to Bute that he had thoroughly convinced him "of the impropriety of marrying a country woman. . . . I am born for the happiness or misery of a great nation, and consequently must act contrary to my passions. . . . I thought the just setting down my resolution never to marry an English woman would please my Dearest Friend."

The opponents of the marriage to Lady Sarah rushed breathlessly into counteractivity. Augusta's secretary, an ancient Jacobite named David Graeme, visited the Protestant European Courts, combing them for a likely candidate. Meanwhile, George III sat dutifully beside his mother, poring over catalogues of Princesses with her and sending Bute dispatches of their progress. "Our evening," one read, "has been spent in looking in the New Berlin Almanack for Princesses where three new ones have been found, as yet unthought of, which you shall know when next Leicester House will have the pleasure of seeing you." The field was finally narrowed down to the Princesses of Darmstadt and Mecklenburg-Strelitz. The Princess of Darmstadt had two defects; she was very large and both her father and grandfather were eccentrics. George III, with his horror of mental disorder, decided against her since he had "such melancholy thoughts of what may perhaps be in the blood." On May 20, 1761, the young King announced to Bute that the account of Princess Charlotte of Mecklenberg-Strelitz was "not in every particular as I could wish, but yet I am resolv'd to fix here."

What had attracted George III to Lady Sarah more than her beauty was her courage and frankness. Yet he himself was woefully lacking in those qualities he most admired, and he could not bring himself to inform her of the direction that events were taking. He could face neither the pain his words would give her nor the poignancy with which her reproaches would cut him. Ingloriously, he played the coward's part.

On July 7, this plucky and engaging girl of fifteen wrote to her cousin, "My dearest Susan. . . . To begin to astonish you as much as I was, I must tell you that the —— is going to be married to a Prin-

cess of Mecklenburg, and that I am sure of it. There is a Council tomorrow on purpose, the orders for it are *urgent* and *important* business; does not your chollar rise at hearing this; but you think I dare say that I have been doing some terrible thing to deserve it, for you won't be easily brought to change so totally your opinion of any person; but I assure you nothing was said, he always took pains to show me some preference by talking twice, and mighty kind speeches and looks even last Thursday, the day after the orders were come out, the hypocrite had the face to come up and speak to me with all the good humour in the world, and seemed to want to speak to me but was afraid. There is something so astonishing in this that I can hardly believe. . . . He must have sent to this woman before you went out of town; then what business had he to begin again? In short his behaviour is that of a man who had neither *sense*, *good nature* nor *honesty*. I shall go Thursday sennight, I shall take care to show that one can vex anybody with a reserved, cold manner, he shall have it I promise him. I did not cry I assure you, which I believe you will as I know you were more set upon it than I was. The thing I am most angry at is looking so like a fool, as I shall have for having gone so far for nothing, but I don't care much; if he was to change his mind again (which can't be tho'), & not give me a very good reason for his conduct, I would not have him, for if he is so weak as to be govern'd by everybody I shall have but a bad time of it. Now I charge you, dear Lady Sue, not to mention this to anybody but Ld and Ly Ilchester, & desire them not to speak of it to any mortal, for it will be said we invent stories, and he will hate us all anyway, for one generally hates people that one is in the wrong with and that knows one has acted wrong, particularly if they speak of it. . . ."

Legend has it that George III finally determined upon Charlotte Sophia of Mecklenburg-Strelitz for his bride after reading a letter which she wrote, when less than sixteen, to Frederick the Great on behalf of her war-torn country. The letter was full of humility and noble sentiments, just the type which would have appealed to George and his advisers. On August 15, 1761, the betrothal ceremony, a symbolic marriage, was held at the bride's home. The British envoy, Drummond, bared his leg to the knee and inserted it under the covers of the sofa on which Princess Charlotte lay. The Princess became greatly upset but was reassured by her brother's gruff admonition, "Allons, ne fais pas l'enfant," he said, "tu vas être reine d'Angleterre."

After a two weeks' voyage, in which the vessel was blown as far north as Norway, Charlotte landed at Harwich on September 7. The following afternoon she and her attendants reached London. Lady Sarah was one of the ten bridesmaids at the King's wedding. She was exquisite. It is reported that the King's gaze constantly strayed toward her and away from his homely little Queen.

Charlotte was indeed no beauty. Thomas Gray gave his impression of her when she reached London:

"As for the Queen, why you have all seen her. What need I tell you that she is thin, and not tall, fine, clear, light brown hair (not very light neither), very white teeth, mouth —, nose straight and well formed, turned up a little at the end, and nostrils rather wide; complexion little inclining to yellow, but little colour; dark and not large eyes, hand and arm not perfect, very genteel motions, great spirits and much conversation."

Gray's unwillingness to describe the Queen's mouth must be ascribed to the poet's sensibilities.\*

The poor seventeen-year-old German girl had reached London at three o'clock in the afternoon, and by nine that night she was married. George broke royal Hanoverian traditions when he refused to permit the English nobility to view him and the Queen in bed on their bridal night. To him, marriage was a serious and holy business. It vexed him next morning, on remarking to Lord Hardwicke at the levee that it was a very fine day, to have the old gossip come back slyly with "Yes sir, and it was a very fine night."

Lord Westmorland, purblind but loyal old Jacobite, who had not been to court since the time of Anne, attended the wedding, and mistaking Lady Sarah Lennox for the Queen, fell to his knees and kissed her hand. George Selwyn adroitly observed, "O! you know he always loved Pretenders." Twenty-seven years later the King showed in one of his insane ramblings that he had not forgot his old love. And nearly half a century after their broken romance he allowed her £1000 a year.

A year after George's marriage, Lady Sarah was wedded to the rac-

\*It was Charlotte's mouth that became the target of the caricaturists. Under Gillray's biting style, it achieved alligator-like proportions, engulfing quantities of food at one snap. Fortunately, as the Queen grew older, she became more comely. Croker records that he once made this observation to her Chamberlain, Colonel Desbrowe, who responded, "Yes, I do think the bloom of her ugliness is going off."

ing baronet, Sir Charles Bunbury, from whom she was divorced in 1776. When she was twenty-two, young Lord Carlisle fell so painfully in love with her that he exiled himself in France so as not to be near her. Some time after her divorce, she married George Napier and bore two of the great Englishmen of the age, Sir Charles James Napier, the conqueror of Scinde, and Sir William Francis Napier, the historian of the Peninsular War. Surely she was justified in writing, late in life: "I like my sons better than I like royal sons, thinking them better animals, and more likely to give me comfort in my old age; and I like better to be a subject, than subject to the terrors of royalty in these days of trouble." It is idle, but fascinating, to speculate on what the infusion of this brilliant and fiery strain of French blood might have meant to the descendants of George III. Surely it would have transformed Victoria!



## CHAPTER V



*"Ce métier de politique c'est un très vilain métier; c'est le métier d'un faquin; ce n'est pas le métier d'un gentil-homme."*

GEORGE III

BUTE, A TORY LORD, and the great Whig leader, William Pitt, had no fondness for each other. Their personalities were even more dissimilar than their politics. The Scotch Earl had begun fostering a distrust of Pitt in George III while he was still the Prince of Wales. He applauded the Prince when he complained to him that Pitt had treated the two of them "with no more regard than he would do a parcel of children," and when he asserted that "the day will come when he must expect to be treated according to his deserts." The attitudes and prejudices of the Princess Dowager Augusta and the Earl of Bute completely dominated the young King at the time of his accession. They both saw in Pitt, who was then the Prime Minister, the only serious threat to their own domination, and they continued to feed the King's natural suspicion of Pitt. George III could not appreciate the great minister's impetuous brilliance. His haughty self-confidence, his theatrical behavior and his inconsistencies were dread-inspiring and wholly unintelligible, because they were so foreign to the King's own makeup.\*

A fortnight after his accession George III significantly declared himself to the Earl of Bute on the subject of Pitt: "I plainly see if every ill humour of a certain man is to be sooth'd, that in less than a couple of months I shall be irretrevably in his fetters; a state of bondage that an old man of seventy odd groan'd, and that twenty-two ought to risk every thing rather than submit; I cannot help telling my Dearest Friend that my honor is here at stake, I therefore will certainly unless the great

\*In his letter to Bute of May 4, 1760, while he was still Prince of Wales, George had referred to Pitt as "the most ungrateful and dishonorable of men . . . the blackest of hearts."

man entirely changes his nature and conduct, show him that aversion which will force him to resign; for I think when one's character and every thing that ought to be dear to a private man (and so much more to a King of a free people) is at stake, the alternative of some uneasiness cannot be compar'd with these one minute; besides I rely on the hearts of my subjects, the only true support of the Crown; they will never join the man who from his own ambition, pride and impracticability, means to disturb my quiet and (what I feel much stronger) the repose of my subjects; if they could be so ungrateful to me who love them beyond anything else in life, I should then I really believe fall into the deepest melancholy which would soon deprive me of the vexations of this life.

"Do not imagine that what I have here sayd is owing to any forbidding thoughts; I am happy enough to think I have the present the real love of my subjects, and lay it down for certain that if I do not show them that I will not permit Ministers to trample on me, that my subjects will in time come to esteem me unworthy of the Crown I wear."

When George III came to the throne, England was waging a triumphant and bloody war on many fronts. France was being driven out of India, Canada, and the Ohio Valley. Pitt, with his limitless vision, had proven himself a magnificent war minister.\* More than 100,000 men were under arms. But wars, even the most successful of them, are expensive. The nation was staggering under a great war budget, for, in addition to supporting its own armies, subsidies were being granted to its ally, Frederick the Great of Prussia. Bute and his fellow Tories looked upon the heavy expenditure with jaundiced eyes. They were the chief landowners and they had to bear the brunt of the excessive war taxation, while the commercial interests, forming the backbone of the Whig party, profited from the war. It was Pitt's war, and the Tories were tired of it.

The youthful King shared the Tory desire for an early peace. Had not his father counselled him against war in his will? "If you can be without War," Frederick Louis had written, "let not your Ambition draw you into it." He clung to the romantic concept of Kingship that he had learned as a boy, and still dreamed of ruling a great nation in lasting peace. He realized that it would be very difficult to stop the

\*He inspired fear and veneration in the leaders of foreign powers who had no personal contact with him. Frederick the Great said of him, "Il faut avouer que L'Angleterre a été longtemps au travail, et qu'elle a beaucoup souffert pour produire M. Pitt; mais enfin elle est accouchée d'un homme."

war as long as Pitt was first minister. Yet Bute feared that if the Great Commoner were abruptly dismissed from the government, he might unite with the opposition before peace had been gained. Soon, however, events played into Bute's hands. In August, 1761, Pitt learned through secret information that a treaty had been concluded between France and Spain. In a cabinet council on September 18 he urged that England wage war against Spain before Spain could be fully prepared. Except for Pitt's brother-in-law, the Earl of Temple, the cabinet leaders refused to support him in his bold, aggressive stand.

On October 5, 1761, Pitt and Temple resigned. The reaction in London was extremely unfavorable; plans were made to drape the City in mourning. But the King was without qualms, his feeling was one of great relief. He told the Earl of Waldegrave, "that the Secretary made him long speeches, which possibly might be very fine, but were greatly beyond his comprehension, and that his letters were affected, formal and pedantic." A fortnight before Pitt's resignation, the Duke of Newcastle wrote, "The King seemed so provoked and so weary that his Majesty was inclined to put an end at all events to the uncertainty about Mr. Pitt." A few days later he added, "The King seems every day more offended with Mr. Pitt, and plainly wants to get rid of him at all events." George III developed a neurotic reaction toward Pitt. During most of the remainder of Pitt's life his presence, or even the thought of him, profoundly irritated the King. He saw in Pitt a great power which he could not assimilate and to which he was unwilling to subjugate himself. George III wanted desperately to banish from his world situations which he could not solve. Many times he wished for Pitt's death, as the only way out of the insufferable dilemma that his presence and his power imposed.

Pitt's resignation from the Cabinet, after the government refused to declare war on Spain, could probably have been prevented by Newcastle, who had the controlling votes in Parliament, or by the other members of the Cabinet, had they threatened to resign as a body. But despite the fact that Pitt had the adulation of the City and its leaders, he was a man who did not inspire devoted loyalty in his colleagues. He was too much of an egotist. He had no faith in party government and was never a real party leader. He flaunted his own weaknesses, but was haughtily intolerant of weakness in others. The chief political leaders decided to desert Pitt and rally about the King. This marked an important milestone in the reign of George III, because it removed from

leadership the only figure powerful enough to maintain the predominance of Parliament against the autocratic ambitions of the Monarch. It was Pitt's withdrawal from the government that permitted King George to establish the personal rule that he stubbornly felt was necessary to the welfare of the nation.

The King and Bute handled Pitt's resignation most adroitly. They showed the adoring populace that Pitt, their idol, was made of mortal dust. A decade before he had served without profit as Paymaster of the Army, an office which had made his rival Henry Fox a man of large wealth and had yielded fortunes to many of the great families. Pitt had always steadfastly refused the personal spoils of politics. And now again, upon his resignation from the Cabinet, he nobly rejected the proffers of the non-resident governorship of Canada and the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster, both sinecures with £5000 a year. But under the pressure of the Court, his resistance finally weakened. He accepted a peerage for his wife, with a grant of £3000 a year for three lives. Many of Pitt's loyal supporters felt that by his acceptance of this offer they had been traduced. In the City, his newly titled wife, Lady Chatham, was bitterly referred to as "Lady Cheat'em."

Nonetheless, the London crowds, always vociferous and unrestrained, showed that Pitt was still their great hero. On December 8, Lord Mayor's Day, his chariot pushed its way slowly to Guild Hall through a cheering throng. The sight of the King and Queen, who had been so popular a year before, evoked little enthusiasm. The mob shouted against "petticoat government" and the "Scotch favorite." Bute's carriage was pelted with stones, mud, and obscene abuse. Only because a group of "bruisers," headed by the one-eyed fighting coachman, George Stephenson, had been employed as a bodyguard, did Bute finally reach Guild Hall. Fearing for his life, he secreted himself in Lord Hardwicke's coach on the return trip.

After Pitt's resignation, Newcastle became First Lord of the Treasury and Bute replaced Holderness as one of the two Secretaries of State. With the thinking element, the new government lost caste greatly when war had to be declared against Spain, on January 4, 1762. It was felt that this move demonstrated the great sagacity of Pitt and furnished proof that his resignation had been forced by political trumpery. The Duke of Newcastle's leadership was short-lived. In May, 1762, Bute became the head of the government.\* He treated the old Duke

\*Appendix.

abominably, though he had faithfully served the House of Hanover for half a century. King George displayed the sulky silence characteristic of him when he was embarrassed by the presence of some one whose feelings he had hurt. Although he could not bring himself to take a gracious farewell of the Duke, he did offer him a pension, which was flatly rejected.

In eighteen short months, the old Whig oligarchy which had ruled the country under George II had been completely disrupted. Pitt, Newcastle, Legge, and Hardwicke were all out. The most important post allotted to the new members of the Cabinet was the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, which was given to Sir Francis Dashwood. The appointment was as unwise as it was astounding—Dashwood, who had been a friend of Frederick Louis, had become notorious as President of the Hellfire Club, an association of twelve jaded young men of personal or social distinction who held semi-annual orgies of a week's duration in Medmenham Abbey on the banks of the Thames. Since Dashwood owned the Abbey ruins and was one of the chief spirits in the group, it became commonly known as the Order of St. Francis. Had he been a man of great financial ability, his replacement of Legge might have been more easily tolerated. As a matter of fact, his predecessor was a man of great capability, while he was an utter incompetent. It was asserted that "a figure of five digits was an incomprehensible mystery" to the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that a tax was put on cider and perry because a tax on linen, which was first indicated, could not be explained to him. His budget speech was so confused and inadequate that it was received with jeers and laughter.

The peace terms of the Seven Years' War were finally agreed upon. The negotiators, under the inept Bedford, had obtained from Spain and France terms that were virtually the same as those which Pitt had rejected in 1761. And for a full year following their rejection, the English had been highly successful in the War; so that even though the terms were favorable to England, there was a strong feeling that the gains were by no means commensurate with their military success. When rumors of the treaty reached London, Wilkes asserted, "It is indeed the Peace of God, for it passeth all understanding." The King and Bute knew that the House could not be made to accept it without the most skillful political management. They realized that none but Henry Fox was capable of performing the task.

Henry Fox was a master of what is generally termed practical politics

—a man of great industry and ability and far from squeamish about the technique of his craft. In his methods he displayed an apparent frankness which made him subject to envy and constant suspicion. He had grown wealthy from his post of Paymaster to the Army.\* By 1762 he had retired from active politics and was settling down to a life of ease in his old age. When Bute asked him to assume responsibility for getting the Peace through the House, he at first appeared unwilling to act. "I thought my name would add to Lord Bute's unpopularity," he said later, "and represented it very strongly to the King as one reason he should not commend me to this service." With assurances that royal gratitude would include a peerage, Fox ceased demurring and resolutely undertook the annihilation of his late political colleagues.

It was an expensive proposition, involving corruption and intimidation of the boldest sort. £80,000 came out of the Treasury to bribe Parliament. During the struggle, it was announced that the Treasury was to be guarded at night.

From the night to the morning  
'Tis true all is right,  
But who shall secure us  
From morning till night?

This popular doggerel, current at the moment, shows how public opinion was incensed at the wholesale bribery. And once again, the great Pitt, repudiated by his sovereign but more than ever the public idol, made a heroic effort to stem the tide.

He arose from a sick-bed to address Parliament, on December 9. Dressed somberly in black and looking very ill, he started his speech supported on either side by a loyal follower. As he went on, he grew so weak that he had to speak from a chair. For nearly four hours he assailed the terms of the peace and denounced the government's tactics. Toward the end, his voice was hardly audible. And although Westminster echoed with the cheers of the members as he was carried out, Henry Fox succeeded in defeating his old rival by 319 votes to a paltry

\*He explained his procedures in that office most disarmingly: "The government borrows money at twenty percent discount," he said. "I am not consulted or concerned in making the bargain. I have, as Paymaster, great sums in my hands, which not applicable to any present use, must either lie dead in the bank, or be employed by me. I lend this to the government in 1761. A peace is thought certain. I am not consulted but my very bad opinion of Mr. Pitt makes me think it will not be concluded. I sell out and gain greatly. In 1762 I lend again: a peace comes in which again I am not consulted, and I gain greatly."

65. Disraeli characterized Pitt as "a forest oak in a suburban garden." But even an oak cannot dominate if the soil at its roots is poisoned.

In February, 1763, the peace was signed; whereupon Fox tried to claim his spoils. When he inquired about the promised peerage, he was amazed to find that it was not to be an Earldom, and that he was expected to resign his lucrative Paymastership of the Army. He had anticipated the contempt of his former colleagues; but he did not think that he would be shabbily treated by the new government that owed its very existence to his work. At the end of March, he called on Bute and begged to be made a Viscount as a proof of "His Majesty being more than ordinarily satisfied with him" and "also because to those who mind precedence, it would be something that his family should stand before Pitt's in the list of Peers." Neither Bute nor the King was willing to grant this request. The humiliating negotiations continued until finally he was made the first Lord Holland and allowed to retain the Pay Office for another three years. "I got that ease I always wished for," he said, "not with the grace I had a right to expect, but I am got there."

Gray's poem, written four years later, fairly expressed the attitude of the public when Fox retired to a country house that he had built on the North Foreland, a region notorious as a haven for smugglers.

Old and abandoned by each venal friend,  
Here Holland formed the pious resolution,  
To smuggle a few years, and strive to mend  
A broken character and constitution.

The poet concludes with a picture of London had Lord Holland been allowed free reign there:

Owls would have hooted in St. Peter's choir,  
And foxes stunk and littered in St. Paul's.

During Henry Fox's political leadership, the Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Devonshire, called to see the King. George III said to his page, "Tell him that I will not see him." The Duke, one of the finest characters of the time and a faithful servant of the Crown, realizing that this was tantamount to dismissal, inquired to whom the King wished the Chamberlain's Wand transferred. "Tell him that orders will be given on that subject," was the testy reply. As the Duke retired he said to the page, "God bless you, it will be very long before you see me here

again.”\* The next day, the other office-holders of this noble family resigned. The Dukes of Newcastle and Grafton and the Marquis of Rockingham had the Lord Lieutenancies of their counties taken from them. “Clerks, tidewaiters, and excisemen were included in the proscription. The widow of an admiral who was distantly connected with the Duke of Devonshire . . . a schoolboy, who was a nephew of Legge, were among those deprived.”

George III was fast developing into a political realist. He had gone far in a short two years. At his accession he had let it be known that there would be no bribery or corruption and that he would be surrounded only by men with impeccable characters. And now he had yielded to the insistence of the Earl of Bute, and had employed Henry Fox, the great master of shady politics, to lead his forces. In truth he was a bewildered and disillusioned young King, apologetically admitting that “we must call on bad men to govern bad men.” But even after Fox’s job had been brilliantly completed, the King’s conscience-pangs were unabated. “I have one principle,” he wrote Bute in the spring of 1763, “firmly rooted in my mind from the many seasonable lessons I have received from my dear friend, never to trust a man void of principles; if any ever deserved that character ’tis Mr. Fox: the seeing him at the head of the House of Commons was very unpleasant to me; but I consented to it, as it was the only means of getting my dear friend to proceed this winter in the Treasury. . . . His bad character comes strongly into my thoughts whenever I hear him named: ’tis not prejudice but aversion to his whole mode of government that causes my writing so openly my thoughts to my old friend.”

The letter shows clearly the great emotional dependence that the young King still placed upon Lord Bute. In this period of uncertainty, when he was being harassed by his conscience for having violated his ideals, he confesses his guilt to his “only friend” and seeks absolution from him. As a matter of fact, there is no discernible lessening of King George’s complete dependence on Bute during the first three years of his reign. The Earl was a man of subtlety and he realized the precariousness of his position. He skillfully maintained a nice balance. “God forbid,” he wrote on one occasion, “that my person should ever come one minute in competition with any wish of Her Majesty’s.” And again, “Do not therefore let me, in the minutest degree, obstruct what domes-

\*The Duke of Devonshire had offered to resign as Chamberlain six months earlier because he resented the fact that Bute rather than himself had acted as chief agent when the King acquired Buckingham House.



tick considerations would otherwise induce you to do." When George III offered him the Garter he insisted that the vacancy be filled by the Queen's brother.

In their correspondence Bute was generally addressed as "My Dearest Friend." His counsel was sought by the young King on all affairs of State and even on the most minor political appointment. George also regarded him as his arbiter of royal etiquette. A year after the accession he wrote to his mentor to learn whether there was any impropriety in his going to Covent Garden to see *Henry V*. At about the same time he sought detailed advice as to the niceties to be observed at a small private ball at Court. One of the things he asked Bute in this letter was ". . . whether he does not think it infinitely properer that none of the family should be partners; I owne to me it appears very like a nursery when brothers and sisters, except where form requires it dance together." He even inquired whether there was any impropriety in permitting Queen Charlotte to wear his miniature at her side instead of on the back of her watch. There was nothing too great nor too small to lay before Bute.

The birth of a male heir to the Throne of England, on August 12, 1762, had given but feeble quickening to the rapidly waning enthusiasm for George III and Queen Charlotte. The decline in the popularity of the King was in large measure the result of the ascendancy of the Earl of Bute. The animosity that all classes of the people felt toward the Scotsman hung over the King's world like a murky pall. Bute was far more honest than most of the political leaders of his day, and he was no more incompetent than many of his colleagues. The popular hatred of him was based on prejudice rather than on reason, and in consequence it was much more violent and more difficult to overcome.\*

Bute was fully aware of his unpopularity. Immediately after he was selected to head the government, he had established two subsidized news-organs to influence public opinion in his favor and to undermine Pitt. *The Briton*, edited by Tobias Smollet, appeared on May 29, 1762, and on June 10, Arthur Murphy's *Auditor* was sold on the streets of London. In the short interval between the debuts of these two government papers, there was started a hostile and fearlessly democratic paper entitled *The North Briton*, edited by that brilliant gadfly, John Wilkes, who was later assisted by his friend, Charles Churchill, the

\*Appendix.

poet. *The North Briton* was a weekly and sold for only two and a half pence. A new war fought by pamphleteers and caricaturists was on. The government liberally subsidized loyal authors and artists. As Churchill put it, "What makes Smollet write, makes Johnson dumb." Even the great Hogarth was enticed into the government forces by the King's gold.

In February there was published in *The North Briton* an imaginary letter of congratulation from James Murray, the Pretender to the Throne, to the Earl of Bute. "Dear Cousin," it ran, "everything, through your benign influence, now wears the most pleasing aspect. Where you tread, the Thistle again rises under your feet. The sons of Scotland, and the friends of that great line of Stuarts no longer mourn. . . ."\*

Wilkes was clever enough not to make accusations based on mere fabrications. The germ of truth was always present. In one list of sixteen promotions in the *Gazette*, there appeared eleven Stuarts and four Mackenzies. Buckingham House was commonly called Holyrood.

At Ben Jonson's death, there had been found in manuscript the plot and first scene of a tragedy dealing with the Earl of Mortimer, who was the lover of the mother of Edward III, and who, through her, governed the King and the nation. Wilkes audaciously republished this fragment with a dedication to the noble Earl of Bute. "I absolutely disclaim," he said, "the most distant allusion and I purposely dedicated this play to your Lordship, because history does not form a more striking contrast than there is between the two Ministers in the reign of Edward III and of George III. The former Prince was held in the most absolute slavery by his mother and her Minister."

This kind of savage jeering must have bitten deep into Bute's pride and self-esteem. In August, 1762, less than four months after he took over the Lordship of the Treasury, he began to talk of resigning. According to Grenville, "his insistences had made the King so uneasy that he frequently sat for hours together leaning his head upon his arm without speaking." Whereupon "Lord Bute, to give ease and tranquility to the King's mind . . . had told the King that he was ready to do whatever his Majesty liked, being devoted to his service and bound by every tie of duty, gratitude and inclination, to look upon any sacrifice of himself as nothing compared to what he owed his Majesty; that

\*This infuriated the King. Supported by the views of the Solicitor-General he wanted to proceed immediately against Wilkes. Finally, on the advice of the other Law Officers, no action was taken.

from this motive only had he consented to stay where he was, and to think of some plan to assist the most amiable Prince that ever sat upon the Throne, and to prevent his being delivered up to receive the law from a wicked faction."

But the tide swept ever more mightily against Bute. The Peace of Paris was highly unpopular. Dashwood's cider tax created fierce storms of opposition which Bute had not the stamina to face. An effigy of the Scotsman was left publicly hanging in Exeter for a fortnight. In the cider counties a crowned ass, led by a man wearing a plaid and a blue ribbon, excited merriment.

In November, 1762, Bute made a more determined effort to resign, but offered to accept a Court appointment so that he could remain near the King's person. George again begged him not to give up the leadership of the government—this time his plea was based on his need for Bute's help in disposing of Fox and his coworkers. "Now I come to the part of my D. Friend's letter that gives me the greatest concern," he wrote, "as it overturns all the thoughts that my D. Friend would have assisted me in purging out corruption, and in those measures that no man but he that has the Prince's real affection can go through; then when we were both dead our memories would have been respected and esteemed to the end of time, now what shall we be able to say that peace is concluded, and my D. Friend becoming a courtier for I fear mankind will say so, the Ministry remains compos'd of the most abandon'd men that ever had those offices; thus instead of reformation the Ministers being vicious this Country will grow if possible worse; let me attack the irreligious, the covetous &c. as much as I please that will be of no effect, for the Ministers being of that stamp, men will with reason think they may advance to the highest pitch of their ambition through every infamous way that their own black hearts or the rascality of their superiors can point out.

"Remember what Fox formerly said, we will give Lord B. a Garter and a Court employment and then we may do as we please."

On November 25, two weeks after the King had made this plea for Bute to retain his post, the monarch was insulted and the minister was jeered and pelted by the mob, while they were enroute to Parliament. The abuse of his friend so alarmed the King that he impulsively wrote him that he could not stand in the way of his resignation. He confessed that because of "the wicked designs of the mob this day; I am ready to put any plan in execution, to rid my D. Friend of appre-

hensions that must every hour attend him, and shall be most happy if changing his situation shelters him from what there is at present too much reason to fear; this I believe the wickedest age that ever was seen; an honest man must wish himself out of it. I own I begin to be heartily sick of the things I daily see; for ingratitude, avarice, and ambition are the principles men act by."

For a time things quieted down. But Bute kept straining at the leash. At the end of January, 1763, Bute wrote a characteristic letter to his old friend, Doctor Campbell. Nobly phrased, it is full of self-contradictions and the most transparent rationalizations. "A few months ago, my worthy friend," he wrote, "the storm that hung over this poor country and my head in particular, grew blacker every minute, and to retire would in me have been treason, and ingratitude to the best of Princes; I have stood it, and I bless God success has crown'd my warmest wishes. The King has now the sceptre in his hand, and the peace once sign'd, ratified, and debated, (if they dare enter the lists) the helm that demanded a bold and venturous hand, may at this peace, be manag'd by a child; so I think, and I would not think otherwise for the world; since having done my duty, and stood the hour of peril, every wish of my heart, every faculty of my mind, and every sense I am indow'd with, call loud upon me to retire in quiet, and pass the autumnal part of life, unruff'd by the little infamous scenes, the black ingratitude, &c. &c. &c. that decorates every hour of my present situation. But in truth, I say not this from the feelings of my mind alone; my health is every day impairing; a great relaxation of my bowells of many years standing is increasing on me continually; the eternal unpleasant labour of the mind, and the impossibility of finding hours for exercise, and proper medicine, the little time I get for sleep, the little I ever enjoy, even when abed, become invincible obstructions to the cure of an old inveterate illness; my health therefore dictates retirement from the greatest weight, that ever lay on any man in this country. But another reason no less powerful with me calls loudly on me. . . . In my opinion the Angel Gabriel could not at present govern this country, but by means too long practic'd and such as my soul abhors. If this be so, it matters little to the King or State who shall distribute the loafs and fishes, but to my mode of thinking, these arts are most repugnant; in plain English, I am an object too colossal to be seen, even by those my hands have rais'd, without envy and the secret idea that were I away a few grains of the confidence I stand now posset of would come to the

share of each repining individual. I therefore, tho' in the bosom of victory, constantly tread on the brink of a precipice, and this without even the hope of doing good."

As Sedgwick points out, it was Bute's sense of his own unfitness for his position and his distaste for the struggle that made him give up. "He committed political suicide because he was on the verge, not, as he dramatized it to himself, of the fate of Strafford or even of Bolingbroke, but of a nervous breakdown." With the unlimited confidence of the King and an overwhelming Parliamentary majority, he could have carried on had he possessed courage and a healthy faith in himself. King George was not surprised when early in March, 1763, Bute renewed his request to be allowed to resign. But the Earl's choice of Henry Fox as his successor was a veritable bombshell.

The King protested that he was "of all men the one I should be most griev'd at seeing" in his noble friend's place. "If Mr. Fox is Minister I plainly see the very Judges must be fill'd by wretches that are unfit to decide the properties of freemen, because they can be the means of acquiring a vote in Parliament;\* . . . don't think that I am merely saying to show my aversion to Mr. Fox but tis to express the anguish of mind I am in at thinking that perhaps necessity may force me to accept of the man I would rather see perish than the head of Ministry."

Bute replied that no ministry "could have stability or keep any order in the House of Commons but with Mr. Fox at the head of it." In humiliation the miserable young monarch bowed to the will of his counsellor. Henry Fox was offered the Treasury on March 14. He declined on grounds of health. The offer tempted him, but his wife vigorously opposed his acceptance. "It would make her miserable and kill him," she said. George Grenville, Bute's second choice, consented to lead the ministry, with Egremont and Halifax, the two Secretaries of State, as his chief assistants.†

The end of the Bute Ministry came on April 8. It had survived not quite a year. That night, in the City, which was Pitt's great stronghold,

\*Henry Fox had written: "The Lord Chancellor must be brought to take the Judges with a view to Parliamentary interest where they are equally fit."

†Many had suspected, when Bute had urged Grenville as his successor, that the new minister was to be a mere cipher. However, Newcastle, with the astuteness of the experienced professional politician, had written to Pitt: "I suppose he [Bute] hopes to retain the same power and influence out of employment that he had in it but he may find that difficult. I question whether he has chosen the best person to act under him for that purpose."

ironical toasts were drunk to "Wit, Beauty, Virtue, and Honour—the King, the Queen, the Princess Dowager and the Earl of Bute."

In a letter to Bedford, Bute insisted that his retirement was the result of bad health, that his physician had informed him that further constant application to business would soon prove fatal. On the other hand, Lord Royston wrote to Hardwicke on April 11: "The alarms of Lord Bute's family about his personal safety are reported here to be the immediate cause of this sudden and unexpected abdication."

Bute and the King felt that they had muddled through successfully. They believed that the personalities and political principles of the new ministers were discordant enough to prevent their being welded into a homogeneous unit that could control the monarch. They planned to have Bute the *de facto* leader of the government—the power behind the throne. The correspondence of the King and the late minister increased; frequently several letters a day were written to Bute. Nearly a month after the change of government George III assured Bute that "every day increases my opinion, that except him there is no one whom I or this nation can depend on." The "independence of the King" about which they so freely wrote each other was an illusory phrase. It meant, in truth, only freedom from interference with Bute's dominant role. The King's dependence and subjection to Bute were still complete.

## CHAPTER VI



*"Good God, Mr. Greenville, am I to be suspected after all I have done?"*

GEORGE III

FATE HAD DETERMINED to castigate the young King. It chose as its representative one who fitted the part admirably, the squint-eyed, prurient, and fearless John Wilkes. Posing as a knight tilting with the dragons of corruption and tyranny, he became the hero of the people. In reality, he was a political career-seeker, who had tried to be appointed ambassador to Turkey or Governor-General of Canada. Failing in both ambitions, he engaged in active hostility to the Earl of Bute and his government. Even though he repeatedly fanned the mob into a frenzy, he maintained his cynical sense of humor throughout. He was the rare demagogue who did not become intoxicated by his own words. Had Wilkes himself become inspired and deluded, the story might have ended differently, for fanaticism breeds fanaticism, and without it great popular movements are rarely born. Many years after the smoke of the battle had settled, Wilkes became a regular attendant at the King's levees. On one of these occasions, the King asked Wilkes about his friend, Sergeant Glynn. "My friend, Sir!" he replied, "He is no friend of mine. He was my counsel—one must have a counsel; but he was no friend; he loves sedition and licentiousness, which I never delighted in. In fact, Sir, he was a Wilkite, which I never was." Benjamin Franklin observed that, had Wilkes had a good private character and George III a bad one, he might have turned that monarch out of his kingdom.

On April 23, 1763, two weeks after Bute's resignation and four days after the King's speech opened Parliament, the famous 45th number of the *North Briton* appeared. Wilkes had cannily anticipated the charge of treason that would be made against him for denouncing the Royal Address. In a preamble to his criticism he stated that even though the speech opening Parliament was read by the King, every one knew that

it was really the production of the first minister, in this case the newly appointed George Grenville. He attempted further to protect himself by praising the King. "Every friend of his country," he wrote, "must lament that a prince of so many great and amiable qualities, whom England truly reveres, can be brought to give the sanction of his sacred name to the most odious measures and to the most unjustifiable public declarations from a throne ever renowned for truth, honour, and unsullied virtue." To all who knew Wilkes, this was obviously sarcastic. He then waded in with fists bared: "As to the entire approbation of Parliament, which is so vainly boasted of, the world knows how that was obtained. The large debt on the Civil List already above half a year in arrear, shows pretty clearly the transactions of the Winter. . . . The Prerogative of the crown is to exert the constitutional powers entrusted to it in a way, not of blind favour and partiality, but of wisdom and judgment. This is the spirit of our constitution. The people too have their prerogative. . . ." King George was enraged. He had been attacked on sensitive points. He had feelings of guilt over his recourse to the bribery of Parliament and he bitterly resented all reference to it. Moreover, he considered himself the great defender of the English constitution, which he pronounced, "the noble fabric which is the pride of all thinking minds and the envy of all foreign nations." To be accused publicly of perverting it in any way was more than he could bear. And the veiled threat of revolution—"the people too have their prerogative"—fanned his rage to fever flame.

Grenville was instructed to consult the Solicitor-General, Sir Fletcher Norton, and the Attorney-General, Charles Yorke, as to the best means of bringing Wilkes to heel. They pronounced the *North Briton*, No. 45, "a most infamous and seditious libel, tending to influence the minds and alienate the people from his Majesty, and to incite them to traitorous insurrections against the King."

Lord Halifax, a Secretary of State, then issued a general warrant: "to make a strict and diligent search for the authors, printers, and publishers of a seditious and treasonable paper, entitled the *North Briton*, No. 45, and these or any of them having been found, to apprehend and seize, together with their papers."\* The war between John

\*The *North Briton*, No. 46, which never appeared publicly, because of Wilkes' arrest, was found in the press room when the premises were ransacked. According to the King, "it was very strong abuse on the thanksgiving for the Peace; that he hop'd I should not profane St. Pauls by coming there on that occasion but should go Privately to my own Chapell."



Wilkes and his Majesty George III was on. Fifty men were taken into custody as the result of the general warrant. While the constables were in Wilkes' house in Great George Street, his coeditor, Churchill, entered. Wilkes immediately greeted him with "Good day, Mr. Thompson. How is Mrs. Thompson today? Does she dine in the country?" The poet quickly took the cue and escaped to the country, where he engaged in effective sniping.

When taken before the Secretaries of State, Wilkes protested that as a member of Parliament he enjoyed an immunity while it was in session. The Earl of Temple, the brother-in-law of Pitt, filed a writ of habeas corpus as soon as Wilkes was placed in the Tower. On May 6 he was brought before Chief Justice Pratt, in the Court of the King's Bench, who released him, on the ground that seditious libel could not be included among the offenses of treason, felony, or breach of the peace, the only crimes for which the members of Parliament enjoyed no immunity. The proceedings not only were publicized but they eclipsed all other news. The King was furious. Wilkes was dismissed from the Buck's Militia in which he held a commission. Privy Councillor Temple paid further tribute to Wilkes by publicly expressing his regret that the corps was to lose such an excellent officer. George then sought angry redress by striking Temple's name from the list of Privy Councillors with his own hand. The King was impotent to deal with Justice Pratt, but he harbored a grudge against him for dismissing Wilkes. This feeling was increased in July when, supported by the whole Bench, Pratt declared a "nameless" warrant illegal and, in consequence, dismissed the printers of *North Briton*, No. 45.

This was one of the bitterest periods of George's life. On August 21 the Earl of Egremont, a Secretary of State and one of the King's staunchest supporters, died of apoplexy. Upset by the way the Wilkes affair was progressing, and placing more of the blame on Grenville than perhaps he fairly deserved, George made steps to carry out his threat to recall Pitt. This illogical plan revealed the King's disturbed state of mind. It gave evidence of a neurotically precipitant desire for a change, a desperate feeling that something, almost anything, must be tried. Pitt was fundamentally opposed to the royal stand in the Wilkes affair. Only four months before, Bute had written the Duke of Bedford that the King was determined ". . . never on any account to suffer those ministers of the late reign who have attempted to fetter

and enslave him ever to come into his service while he lives to hold the sceptre." And chief among them was Pitt.

As the fight between Wilkes and the government proceeded it became obvious that Lord Grenville, the Prime Minister whom Bute had chosen as his successor, could prove no match for Wilkes. Grenville was, perhaps, too honorable, and certainly too rigid and unimaginative, to defeat the wily journalist. George needed a tower of strength to support him. In his confusion he turned back to Pitt.

In the King's disturbed state, negotiations could not proceed smoothly. As early as August 8, Bute began making contacts with Pitt through intermediaries. But the King could not reconcile himself to the step he had decided was imperative. On the 24th, he declared that "he would not put himself into the hands of Mr. Pitt." Yet the very next day, definite overtures were made to the Great Commoner. On August 27, a day on which Grenville reported George III as "a good deal confused and flustered," Pitt had a two-hour conference with the King. Pitt declared that he would serve only if the Whig leaders took over the government and turned out all of "the King's Friends." George refused the enslavement implied in these terms, and turned once again to Grenville.

That night Grenville found the King "in the greatest agitation." The Minister consented to remain in office if the King would no longer permit Bute, whom he considered a dangerous meddler, to exercise his secret influence. He was reassured by the declaration that Bute "desired to retire from all business whatsoever, from the reasons of nationality, unpopularity, etc., etc." As a matter of fact, despite such representations, on the next morning Bute was still attempting to prevail upon Pitt to head the Cabinet upon terms more acceptable to the monarch. In this crisis we again have evidence of George III's instability when confronted by a serious dilemma.

George was too much like the English bulldog to let go of Wilkes, even though in the struggle Wilkes had proved to be a porcupine. When the frightened printers refused to print Wilkes' writings, the redoubtable fellow set up his own private press, on which, either by way of experimentation or amusement, he printed an obscene poem, "An Essay on Woman," which consisted of parodies on Pope's "Essay on Man" and the hymn, "Veni Creator Spiritus." Vulliamy quotes a criticism of these productions by a scandalized contemporary: "The natural abilities of the ass are made the subject of an unclean descrip-

tion. . . . The sense of Pope's Universal Prayer is perverted to serve the vilest purpose of unchastity, and that memorable soliloquy . . . this shameless author entitled *The Dying Lover to his Pudenda*. Next follows an inimitably prophane paraphrase of Veni Creator, which he ludicrously affects to call the *Maid's Prayer*. The Blessed Spirit of God is ludicrously insulted by a repetition of the grossest obscenity in the form of Supplication; and that sacred expression Thrice Blessed Glorious Trinity is compelled, by an impious similitude, to convey an idea to the reader impure, astonishing and horrible." To the poem there was annexed a set of explanatory notes alleged to be the work of Bishop Warburton. There is little doubt that Wilkes had been aided in this pornography by Thomas Potter, a son of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Both he and Wilkes had been members of the Medmenham Abbey group. Only a dozen copies of "An Essay on Woman" had been privately printed for the perusal of fellow members and kindred spirits. In the search of Wilkes' premises some of the sheets had been taken by the constables. This was the type of literature which was calculated to arouse the deeply religious and prudish George even more than the political diatribes in *North Briton*, No. 45. He was determined to prosecute their author.

Grenville, with his rare genius for political ineptitude, selected John Montague, Earl of Sandwich, to lead the new attack on Wilkes in the House of Lords. Sandwich, who had himself been a member of the Medmenham Abbey fraternity and was in his own right renowned for obscene profanity, arose in the Senate Hall wrapped in a toga of righteous indignation, exclaiming, "I have a paper in my hand whose contents are of such a horrible and detestable nature, that I almost wonder it did not draw down the immediate vengeance of heaven upon this nation." He then read aloud the choicest morsels from this new work by his old companion.\*

In the *North Briton* Wilkes had stigmatized Samuel Martin, one of the Treasury Secretaries, as "the most treacherous, base, selfish, mean, abject, low-lived, and dirty fellow that ever wriggled himself into secretaryship." Martin immediately engaged in serious pistol practice. When he felt that he had become proficient enough, he issued

\*Dashwood observed that this was the first time he had ever heard the Devil preach. It was this speech in the House of Commons that earned for Sandwich the name of "Jemmy Twitcher," a character in *The Beggar's Opera*, who had informed against his fellows. It is said that even the King made use of this nickname.

a verbal counterblast against Wilkes, which he followed by a challenge to a duel with pistols. In the encounter Martin's first shot was wide, Wilkes' pistol misfired, and Martin's second shot struck his antagonist in the side. Despite the chief delinquent's incapacity, the Wilkites and anti-Wilkites now debated with added fury the constitutional and personal questions involved. Early on the morning of November 25 the House decided by a vote of 258 to 133 that the Privilege of Parliament should not extend to seditious libels. The Lords then concurred and the two Houses sent their sympathies to the King for the indignities which he had suffered. Wilkes was commanded to appear at the Bar of the House in a week.

He had become the idol of the London mobs. Everywhere were heard cries of "John Wilkes and Liberty!" On December 3, when the hangman attempted to carry out the orders of Parliament to burn a copy of *No. 45*, the half-burned paper was rescued from the fire in front of the Royal Exchange and triumphantly paraded about. In its place those despised symbols of the alliance between Bute and Princess Augusta—the jackboot and the petticoat—were consigned to the flames as the frenzied multitude applauded.

On December 7 Wilkes' medical attendants testified that their patient was physically unable to appear before Parliament. A week later they gave similar testimony. The House questioned the credibility of this partisan medical testimony and appointed Doctor Heberden and Mr. Cæsar Hawkins to examine the patient and report to them after the Parliamentary recess. Wilkes, who had been up and about, working, refused to see them. Soon after Christmas he fled to France, sending the House the reports of two French doctors, certifying that he was still unfit to undertake the onerous work of a member of the English Parliament. As Lord Chesterfield wrote his son, "It was his only way of defeating both his creditors and his prosecutors."

On January 20, 1764, he was expelled from the House and in the following month he was found guilty in absentia by Justice Mansfield of printing and publishing a seditious libel and a blasphemy. He was then outlawed. The King was not content with the flight of the enemy; his blood boiled with righteous anger. He insisted on further reprisals. General Conway lost his post in the Bedchamber, as well as his command of a regiment of dragoons, because he had voted against the Court party on the question of general warrants. Barré and A'Court also lost their commands. "Firmness and resolution must now be

shown," the King wrote to Grenville, "and no one's friend saved who has dared to fly off; this alone can restore order, and save this country from anarchy. . . . I hope in a fortnight that those who had deserted may feel that I am not to be neglected unpunished!"

George III and Grenville felt a great relief now that Wilkes was exiled and outlawed. ~~The Prime Minister seemed more secure in the~~ royal grace because of the apparently successful outcome of the affair, and he turned his attention to other problems. He chose this moment to propose the fateful Stamp Act to the American colonies. Both Walpole and Pitt had previously considered some such form of taxation, but they had feared to carry it through. Townshend and Bute, during Bute's administration, had also contemplated the same thing, but either prescience or the short duration of the ministry prevented them from going further. Grenville, however, took no warning from his predecessors, and submitted the Stamp Act to the colonial agents in London in March, 1764. He told them to write to the colonists to learn whether any alternative type of taxation was preferable. By the first of the year, every colony but Pennsylvania had announced that the Stamp Act would be considered highly obnoxious. Some made representations that it could never be enforced, but substitute measures were not suggested.

According to this Act, all bills, bonds, leases, insurance policies, newspapers, broadsides, and legal documents had to bear stamps, in order to have legal validity. The stamps on legal papers were to vary in cost from one shilling, on documents used in the proceedings of ecclesiastical courts, to six pounds, on grants from a governor. A large number of articles of trade had also to bear stamps. A pack of cards was taxed a shilling, a pair of dice ten shillings, a pamphlet one shilling, and a newspaper a halfpenny or a penny, depending upon its size. By this means an annual revenue of £100,000 was to be raised to defray a portion of the expense of maintaining in the American colonies a standing army of 10,000 regular soldiers. It was obvious that the colonists would, in a short time, be required through other sources of revenue to assume the entire cost of its maintenance. Ireland and India already had such Army units. As a result of Pitt's glorious Seven Years War, the national debt had increased to 148 millions of pounds, a figure which was gigantic for those times. The mercantile interests in England strenuously objected to carrying a greater burden of taxation.

Except for a schedule of trade agreements and restrictions which were only partially enforced, the colonies had been left to a very large extent

to govern themselves. Ignorance in regard to America and the Americans was colossal. One Secretary of State, who was officially in charge of the colonies, sent his dispatches to the Governor of the Island of New England. There is much truth in the surmise that had the Grand Tour, which was so essential a part of the education of the young eighteenth-century English aristocrat, included America in its itinerary there would have been no Revolution.

Grenville and George III were strikingly alike in many ways. They were both obsessed with a sense of duty. When they undertook a task it was pursued relentlessly and with steam-roller tactics. They were utterly intolerant of what they considered neglect of duty in others. The youthful King was as deficient in political tact as was his Minister. Pitt, in one of his great speeches on America, said to Grenville, "There are two lines in a ballad of Prior's, of a man's behaviour to his wife, so applicable to you and your colonies, that I cannot help repeating them:

Be to her faults a little blind,  
Be to her virtues very kind."

But George III and Grenville were incapable of such forbearance. Each was rigid according to his code. It was curiously characteristic of the King's stubbornness that throughout his contacts with his first minister, he persisted in spelling and pronouncing his name Greenville. In studying the American problem Grenville, with characteristically narrow vision, neglected the fact that England was deriving millions of pounds from lucrative trade with the colonies. All that concerned him was that the revenue from American taxation was less than £2000 a year—a negligible sum which it cost £7500 to collect. Smuggling was rampant. The law forbade colonists to import any tea except from the mother country, and yet, of the million and a half pounds consumed annually, not more than a tenth came from England. The chief revenue officers appointed by the Crown considered their posts sinecures, and, by leave of the Treasury, resided habitually in England. After the war a Treasury official declared with more than a modicum of truth that "Grenville lost America because he read the despatches—which none of his predecessors had done."

That their legislative designs were extremely unpopular in America and considered impolitic by many leaders at home was of no importance either to the King or the First Lord of the Treasury. They felt their position to be economically, legally, and morally sound. The

colonies had shown by their rejection of the Stamp Act that they were peopled by potential Wilkites. The smoulderings of anarchy had to be promptly stamped out. The colonists would play the parts for which Divine Wisdom had fashioned them. The mother country would make her whimpering children stop their fussing. The King had said that firmness and resolution were needed; and such there would be. The Stamp Act was introduced into an almost empty House early in 1765. Only 49 opposed it—Pitt was at home, sick, and Burke had not yet been elected to Parliament.

Whether the colonial policy, as exemplified by the Stamp Act, was conceived by Grenville or was really the work of George III, it is impossible to say. Such difficulty is frequent in limited monarchies, where it is generally advantageous for the ruler to work through his minister rather than in his own name. It seems probable that it was a common policy about which there was a unified opinion.\*

The similarities in the characters of George III and Grenville made, at times, for common understanding, and at other times for intolerable friction. At the beginning of the ministry, the relationship had been quite cordial and the monarch's support whole-hearted. But, as we have already noted, within four months the King was secretly negotiating for Pitt's return, and when Grenville caught his sovereign red-handed at his intrigues, there was a marked coolness between King and Prime Minister.

Grenville placed much of the blame for this incident upon Lord Bute, and was forever importuning the King to have no more traffic with him. When George decided to give the office of Keeper of the Privy Purse, which had been one of Bute's offices, to Sir William Breton, a mutual friend of his and Bute's, Grenville objected. "It would be attributed to the backstairs influence of my Lord Bute," said Grenville. "Good God, Mr. Greenville," protested the King angrily, "am I to be suspected after all I have done?"

It seemed that the King was indeed to be suspected. Grenville was not the only minister to resent the under-cover machinations of Bute. The Duke of Bedford was particularly concerned about Bute's influence on the King, and exacted royal assurances that the Scotsman would no longer exert any political power. In concert with Lord Sandwich and Lord Halifax, he kept a constant watch on the road

\*Later, when the Stamp Act was repealed, the King did not try to save it—which, in so stubborn a man, suggests that it was not his special brain-child.

from Luton to London; and when Bute returned to town in 1764, Bedford accused the King of having broken his agreement with the ministry.

Although the ministers were of one mind regarding Bute, no real unity existed in the Cabinet.\* Bedford, who was one of the most unpopular men in London and very difficult to work with, was constantly urging the King to replace Grenville with Pitt. In March, 1764, he wrote Grenville an "angry letter" for conferring a Red Ribbon on Lord Clive. Grenville, on the other hand, was at loggerheads with Sandwich for trying "to steal the nomination of the Knight of the Shire for Cambridge." He fought with Halifax over colonial appointments and salaries, and complained to the King of his insubordination.

The King on his part was highly dissatisfied with his Cabinet. He told Grenville that Halifax and Sandwich were not supporting him. All the Cabinet members, except for Grenville, he considered lacking in conscientiousness and discipline. He complained that he met with nothing but "slackness, inability, precipitation and neglect." Halifax was sloppy in his work and Bedford was negligent about attending Cabinet Councils. Sandwich was a profligate, and the King found him "extremely dilatory in public affairs." As for Grenville himself, George complained to Bute, "When he has wearied me for two hours, he looks at his watch to see if he may not tire me for an hour more."† Grenville grew more and more tedious and peevish, until the King's patience could hardly endure. "The conduct of Mr. Grenville to Mr. Worstley," he wrote, "on the determination I took of curtailing the office of painter was so remarkable that it deserves a place here; on the Surveyor General's reporting to him my intention, he had the insolence to say that if People presumed to speak to Me on business without his previous consent, he would not serve an hour."

George III particularly resented the ministers' place-filling activities. "No office," he asserted, "fell vacant of ever so little value, or in the Department of any other person, that they did not claim it and declar'd

\*The internal squabbling that frequently came to public notice strongly militated against public acceptance of the Ministry as anything but a temporary and makeshift government. Early in the summer of 1764, when Grenville got the King's permission to visit Wotton for ten days, the newspapers immediately announced that there was to be a new Ministry.

†Forty years later, when Grenville's son became head of the Cabinet, similar difficulties arose. To Malmesbury the aging monarch characterized father and son as "the brotherhood that must always either govern despotically or oppose government violently."



that if not comply'd with they could not serve." This was his prerogative, and he hated having to share it. He had an astonishingly detailed knowledge of the personnel of all the government services, even of the Church and the universities. Hardly had a vacancy occurred before he had his man ready to fill it. He fully recognized the tremendous power of such patronage and had used it in creating his own separate and loyal political group, known as "the King's Friends."\*

Causes for friction there were in plenty between George III and his Cabinet. But throughout this troubled period, the restless specter of Bute, rising time after time, had the most disrupting effect of all upon the confused and harried King.

Banished from his great house on Audley Street, forbidden all intercourse with his sovereign, and separated from Augusta, Bute was supposed to while away his time in harmless pastoral pursuits. Irrked by the situation, he begged Bedford to be allowed to return to London. One of the appeals which he made was that he "had daughters to marry." The amount of pressure which was exerted by the Dowager Princess, and indirectly by the Earl, upon the young King to rebel against the exile can well be imagined. And George had been in the habit of minding his mother and his old mentor. His all-powerful and relentless conscience would allow him little peace. Surely everything that the Earl had done had been undertaken for his welfare. How could he, reputedly one of the most powerful men in the whole world, permit his loyal friend to be treated like a political leper and still retain his own honor and his self-respect? His affection for Bute was so strong that even after the passage of a quarter of a century, he was to describe him "as the truest and best friend I ever had." There was active communication between them, but, in order to preserve the semblance of political peace, George had constantly to be uttering sacred oaths that none existed. Very little of their correspondence after 1763 is in existence. The letters were delivered secretly and were generally destroyed as soon as they were read.

The news from Luton was often quite tragic. Jenkinson reported that on his visit of March 17, 1764, he found Bute "in the lowest dejection of mind, scarce speaking a word. . . . He at last told Mr. Jenkinson that he thought himself very ill used; he complained of the Duke of Bedford and Lord Sandwich, and said he would never forgive the

\*Burke defined them as "the determined majority within doors, which, supporting no ministry, is blindly devoted to the Court."

former. As soon as dinner was over he went upstairs, and continued in the gloomy mood the next morning."

Had the ignominy which he was forced to suffer created a strong Ministry with growing popularity for the Crown, George III might have accepted the situation as the inevitable verdict of fate. But the unpopularity and the pusillanimity of the government were steadily increasing. "Williams, the reprinter of the *North Briton*," wrote Walpole early in 1765, "stood in the pillory today in the Palace Yard. He went in a hackney coach the number of which was 45. The mob erected a gallows opposite to him, on which they hung a boot with a bonnet of straw. Then a collection was made for Williams, which amounted to near £2000. In short, every public event informs the administration how thoroughly they are detested, and they have not a friend, whom they do not buy. Who can wonder, when every man of virtue is proscribed, and they have neither parts nor character to impose even upon the mob! Think to what a government is sunk when a Secretary of State is called in Parliament to his face, 'the most profligate sad dog in the Kingdom,' and not a man can open his lips in his defence. It is more mortifying to me to reflect how great and respectable we were three years ago, than satisfactory to see those insulted who have brought shame upon us." George III could not help wondering what Bute's banishment was accomplishing. The same old symbols, the jackboot and the petticoat, were furnishing sport for the populace. How could he shake off this Ministry, which had become a yoke about his neck? It had to be done. Grenville had, by the beginning of 1765, become anathema. The necessity to be rid of him was fast becoming a neurotic obsession.

## CHAPTER VII



*"George the Third is the true Successor of George the Second, and inherits all his grandfather's humiliations."*

HORACE WALPOLE

EARLY IN 1765, George III developed his first attack of mental illness. The clinical details at our disposal are much less clear than in the case of his four subsequent attacks, because it was so mild that it incapacitated him for only a few days at a time. Because of the absence of severe or prolonged disturbances, its true nature was successfully masked from all but very few of his contemporaries. It was natural for those nearest to the King to do everything possible to keep the world in ignorance of the fact that the crowned head was none too sound. Every possible subterfuge and prevarication was resorted to. Sir William Duncan, the physician in charge of the case, reported that his royal patient was suffering from a cold, with which he developed a slight fever. It was truly an unusual sort of a cold, in that it persisted chronically from January to July with sporadic exacerbations. Whether a respiratory illness actually occurred as a complication is difficult to say. In all probability, the disorder was purely mental and the clinical reports were falsified.

The 1765 illness, in addition to being milder than subsequent disorders, presented a less consistent type of psychiatric picture. The later illnesses were all outspoken attacks of manic excitement. This first attack seems to have been of mixed manic-depressive character with the depressive element dominant. There were days of dejected brooding, followed by short and indefinite periods of overactivity. Essentially, it consisted of a period of about six months during which the King's customary instability of mood was pathologically exaggerated. There was apparently little or no distortion in thinking. Delusions were absent and, according to the King's own statement, he did not lose track of time nor contact with reality. The fact that the illness was of so mild a

character and yet persisted for so long a time probably resulted from external circumstances. Not only was the patient forced to carry on his onerous duties, but fate seems to have worked maliciously to produce peculiarly disorganizing problems in his world at this period.

From Grenville's diary we gain the impression that during the second half of December, 1764, the King was gradually growing depressed. He comments upon George's unusual difficulty in coming to decisions, a frequent symptom in depressions. During the early days of January, 1765, Grenville noted his "cold and distant" attitude. On January 10 George III delivered his address to Parliament on conditions in the American colonies. It was recorded without dissent. On the following day Grenville found him "embarrassed and distant." During the night of January 13 the King was attended by Sir William Duncan, who had him bled 14 ounces. He reported to Grenville that his royal patient had "a violent cold, and had passed a restless night, and complained of stitches in his breast." On the 14th, George was unable to see any of his ministers. By the following day an unnaturally rapid transition in mood had occurred, for he was "perfectly cheerful and good humoured, and full of conversation." Twenty-four hours later he had relapsed into a state marked by a good deal of "confusion and embarrassment." There is little information available about his condition for more than a month. On February 25 he was again bled. On the 26th Grenville wrote, "The King all this time continues ill, and sees none of his ministers."

It was hoped that amendment would take place after a good night on March 2, but the patient awakened in the morning with "a return of fever." Lord Bute, who had for some days been clamoring to be admitted to the sick-room, was permitted to spend a quarter of an hour with "his Master," on March 3. For some days following this, no one, not even the King's brothers, was allowed to visit him. He attempted to transact some business by letter.

"The King was not so well as he had been," wrote Grenville on March 6, "his pulse rose in the morning but sunk again at night, and he was much better and quite cheerful in the evening." That special note is made of his cheerfulness is of interest. It is also noteworthy that a favorable change in mood occurred in the evening, for patients suffering from a depression are, as a rule, at their worst in the morning and at their best in the evening. Grenville again saw the King on March 10. He found him "very cheerful, and his complexion clear, but a good

deal thinner than before his illness." When he saw him a week later the Queen drew him aside and said that she wished "that the King would not see his servants so often, nor talk so much upon business." Upon the latter point, she was particularly insistent. On the 18th he found "the King's countenance and manner a good deal estranged." On the night of the 21st, the patient was cupped. Despite the Queen's wishes, he continued to see his ministers and transact business. On the 25th, after his return from an airing, he and Grenville had a long session.

All sorts of rumors were circulating about the King's mysterious malady; some made very light of it, others were alarming. Horace Walpole, like most gossips, was a harbinger of the worst. "The King has been very seriously ill and in great danger," he wrote on March 26. "I would not alarm you, as there were hopes when he was at the worst. I doubt he is not free yet of his complaint, as the humour fallen on his breast still oppresses him. They talk of his having a levee next week, but he has not appeared in public, and the bills are passed by commission, but he rides out."

In another letter of the same date, Walpole wrote: "Our eyes have been lately turned to very serious danger; the King has been extremely ill, with a fever, violent cough, and a humour fallen on his breast. He was blooded four times, recovered enough to take the air, but caught new cold, and was cupped last Friday. However, he has been out in his chaise every day since."

From a medical point of view, these are indeed garbled accounts. Throughout the eighteenth century, exposure to fresh air was considered dangerous for those suffering from respiratory ailments, and it is certain that a patient would not have been permitted to go riding the day after a relapse. Especially would this have been true in the case of George III. Kings are never subjects for experimental innovations; they receive extremely conservative medical treatment. And it is inconceivable that the royal patient was suffering from a serious respiratory illness that permitted him to ride abroad but made it impossible for him to sign state papers.

Meanwhile, acts that shaped the destiny of the English-speaking world had been put into motion perfunctorily. The Stamp Act, easily passed by Parliament, received the Royal Assent by commission, on March 22, the King then being too ill to attend to any business which was not of very great importance. One is not justified in concluding

that George III's disorder was in any measure responsible for the Stamp Act's becoming a law, or that this act played a part in his illness. He was convinced of the constitutionality and the expediency of the measure. Only matters about which he entertained gnawing doubts seriously upset him. His illness resulted from the perplexity over his relations with his ministers and Bute, rather than from anxiety over American affairs.

On April 1 the King went to Richmond. On the 3rd he held a levee. After it was over, he informed the Cabinet that during his illness he had grown aware of the necessity of framing a Bill of Regency to provide for a government, should such a step become necessary during the minority of his eldest son.

The facts of the Regency dispute are relatively simple and can be succinctly stated. In his depressed state of mind, George feared an early death and foresaw only chaos should this eventuate. In consequence he took the initiative and personally urged the passage of the measure. In order to prevent faction from developing within the royal family, the King wanted to draw up a political will, naming a Regent to succeed himself. The Cabinet strongly opposed the secret nomination of a Regent. A compromise was worked out by which the nominee could remain secret but had to be selected from a list of eligibles submitted to the King by Parliament. Apparently Grenville and his colleagues had insisted on this measure in order to make certain that the Earl of Bute could not be named. In keeping with this policy, they opposed the inclusion of the name of the King's mother, the Dowager Princess Augusta, believing that her appointment as Regent was tantamount to appointing Bute to the office. It was even asserted that both the Lord Chancellor and Lord Mansfield expressed doubt that either the King's wife or his mother were members of the royal family.\*

The Duke of Richmond moved that the King's mother should be formally and separately declared one of the eligibles. This motion was lost. Halifax, Sandwich, and later Grenville conferred with the King and persuaded him that the Regency Bill could not secure a majority in Parliament unless Augusta's name were excluded as an eligible. They counselled that to save his mother and himself great embarrassment, he should let it be known that he wished her name excluded

\*This reminds one of the famous trial in the sixteenth century, reported by Laurence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy*, in which the wife of Charles, Duke of Suffolk, was declared to be of no kin to her legitimate son.

from consideration. According to Walpole, Bedford\* "almost danced about the House for joy" when the Lords were informed of the King's wishes. Walpole struck the popular reaction to it when he wrote, "It is the worst of 'North Britons' published by Act of Parliament." When the Bill was sent before the House of Commons, Chief Justice Morton of Chester moved that the Princess Augusta be included as an eligible. The government leaders were now faced with a real dilemma. There is no better index of their unpopularity and weakness than that they were beaten by men supporting the cause of one of the most unpopular figures in England. "The Ministers," wrote Walpole, "conceived that the omission of the Princess would be universally approved. They flattered themselves with acquiring such popularity by that act that the King would not dare to remove them." Halifax made a sorry figure indeed when the Bill was returned to the Lords with the name of the Dowager Princess included in the list. As Walpole put it rather inelegantly, he and his colleagues had to "swallow their own vomit."

The diarist suggests that the scheme to omit the Dowager Princess was acceded to by the self-righteous members of the House of Lords because she was thought to be a naughty woman. Her omission at this time was particularly noticeable because in the Bill of Regency, framed by Newcastle for George II, fourteen years before at the death of Frederick Louis, Augusta was the individual publicly designated for Regent.

Grenville has full notes in his own diary on the reactions of George III to the machinations which developed during the progress of the Regency Bill. Under date of April 28 he recounts a long-winded and exasperating speech that he made to the King in which he reprimanded his Majesty severely for not having planned the Regency legislation with his help, rather than with that of his subordinates. "The King," he records, "during this conversation, seemed exceedingly agitated and disturbed, he changed countenance, and flushed so much that water stood in his eyes from the excessive heat of his face; he two or three times interrupted Mr. Grenville." On May 5, the minister found the King quite panic-stricken over the Lords' having excluded his mother from the Regency. He begged Grenville to undo this act and gave him permission to make use of his own great influence in the House of Commons. "Mr. Grenville then endeavoured to show His Majesty how impossible it was for him to propose the alteration; that His Majesty's Secretary of State having, with his authority, proposed these

\*The Lord President of the Council.

words, which excluded Her Royal Highness, how could his Chancellor of the Exchequer by the same authority propose the adding her name? That people must and would suppose that either one or the other had mistaken His Majesty."

He further discomfited the King by reminding him that had his advice been taken to nominate the Regent publicly the whole thing would have been avoided. The diarist reports that after this conversation, "The King seemed much agitated, and felt the force of what Mr. Grenville said." Lord Mansfield then saw the King, ". . . and urged very strongly to His Majesty the unhappy appearance of wavering and fluctuation which this affair must inevitably give to his councils. . . . He advised His Majesty for the future to consult with fewer people upon his business, merely two or three at most, and to make his decisions firmly to destroy the idea of instability and wavering, so destructive to his business, and with which men's minds were so strongly possessed, and would still be more so from this last affair. . . . The King was in the utmost degree of agitation and emotion, even to tears." This homily struck a tender spot in the depressed and indecisive King, already overburdened with feelings of guilt and inadequacy.

In the middle of May another tribulation came to the harassed sovereign. A bill for a protective tariff on silk, which would have improved the wretched conditions of the overmanned silk-weaving trade centered about Spitalfields, passed the House of Commons. Largely as the result of Bedford's opposition, it failed in the House of Lords. The angry weavers began to riot.

King George did what he could to placate the mob, which sought him out at Richmond, by uttering beneficent evasions. In his muddled, depressed, and self-condemnatory condition, he then began to wonder whether he would not have done better had he been militantly aggressive toward the insurgent weavers. To Grenville, he seemed "in a great disorder and agitation." Harassed by the thought that people might believe that he had kept out of the way from fear, he declared that he would put himself at the head of his army, or do anything to save his country.

The angry mob surrounded Bedford House in Bloomsbury and threatened to set fire to it. They succeeded in breaking down its outer wall. The grounds became an army encampment. Riot calls were read and intense excitement prevailed.

When the disturbance was at its height, it was suggested that the



King's uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, the famous "Bloody Butcher of Culloden," be put in charge of the troops. The King was badly upset emotionally and was unable to decide whom to select for this post. He wanted his uncle, but on maturer consideration he realized Cumberland's unfitness for the task. His appointment would have resulted in a massacre. With sober good sense, George decided that Lord Granby was the proper man, observing that "Lord Granby is a very popular man and might save the lives of these deluded wretches which may be expos'd and sacrific'd by another Commander equally well intention'd but less a favorite of the People." The Duke of Bedford insisted to the King that the riot had been incited by his political enemy, Lord Bute.

The most serious mischief accomplished by the riot was the production of such a state of nervousness in the Duchess of Bedford that she had to be bled. The hostile grumbling of the rioters continued for some days. The watermen, shoemakers, and many other trades prepared to join with them in a sympathetic strike, but fortunately the whole thing gradually subsided.\*

Everything seemed to the King so confused, so upset, and so hopeless that he decided to change his Cabinet. In his bewilderment he scarcely knew where to turn to find a trustworthy agent in arranging the delicate business. His relationship with his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, had fluctuated markedly in the past few months. The Duke's loyalty to the dynasty had been unwavering for many years, but early in 1765 he had dared to oppose Lord Bute, which had incensed his royal nephew. Cumberland suffered an apoplectic stroke soon after his defection, and George would not even inquire after his health. After the Duke's behaviour, George told Grenville, no one could suppose he would inquire out of regard to him. But now, with one of

\*Suffrage was so seriously restricted by legalities during the eighteenth century that laborers and artisans had no legitimate means of giving voice to their demands. This very inarticulateness bred recourse to force. In 1760 strikes were just beginning to be widely used. Riots had an older and less honorable history. The two were not always distinct. Benjamin Franklin wrote from London on May 14, 1768, that there were "mobs patrolling the streets at noonday, some knocking all down that will not roar for Wilkes and liberty; courts of justice afraid to give judgement against him; coal-heavers and porters pulling down the houses of coal merchants that refuse to give them more wages; sawyers destroying sawmills; sailors unrigging all the outward-bound ships and suffering none to sail till the merchants agree to raise their pay; watermen destroying private boats and threatening bridges. . . ."

his lightning changes of attitude, the King turned once again to his uncle.

On May 14, the Duke of Cumberland, at the suggestion of the King, invited Lord Temple to lunch, to negotiate a change of Ministry. On that day Grenville finally forced George III reluctantly to admit that a change in Ministry was being contemplated.

On May 17 it was reported that the King had a fresh cold and would not hold a levee. On the evening of the 18th Cumberland had a three-hour conference with the King. On the following day he journeyed to Hayes to treat with Pitt and Temple. The Great Commoner refused to form a government. He said that ". . . he did not see a possibility of his being of any service, for as yet he heard nothing that gave him room to hope the closet would be propitious to him. On the contrary, My Lord Bute, whose influence was as strong as ever, and whose notions of government were widely different from his, would disincorporate the King to his system."

Abortive attempts were then made to form a Ministry about Lord Lyttleton and Charles Townshend. Finding it impossible to induce the great leaders, who were out, to come in or to establish a government headed by those already in the Cabinet who were his real friends, George began once more to retrace his steps. On the 21st he saw Grenville, who did not attempt to conceal his pique. He blamed Bute for the state of the government and accused the King of having betrayed them by his continued reliance on that lord, despite his former denials. The King again strongly disavowed Bute's influence. Grenville responded, ". . . that the world would have difficulty to be persuaded of that, and that it was now more than ever, essentially necessary that Lord Bute should have nothing to do in His Majesty's councils." George ordered Grenville to hasten to his colleagues and try to induce them to remain in his service. His impatience was intense. By evening he could wait no longer and dispatched a note to his minister: "(Tuesday, May 21, 1765, 15 min. past 9 P.M.) Mr. Greenville," he wrote—"I am surprised that you are not yet come, when you know it was my orders to be attended this evening. I expect you therefore to come the moment you receive this."

Grenville hastily left the conference then in progress at Bedford House, to inform the King that the Ministry's terms were not yet agreed upon. At noon the following day his Majesty was given their five-point ultimatum. Bute was to be deprived of all influence and power. His brother, Mr. Stuart Mackenzie, was to be removed from

his office of Privy Seal of Scotland. Lord Holland was to be deprived of the Paymastership of the Army. The Ministry was to have full sway in Irish affairs. Lord Granby was to be Commander-in-Chief of the Army. This was directed at the Duke of Cumberland, who through his efforts to form a new government had earned the disfavor of the Ministry.

Naturally, the ultimatum was a bitter pill for George III. After a day of conferences he sent for Grenville at eleven o'clock at night. The King said that he was particularly upset at deserting Mackenzie, to whom he had given his word that his was a life appointment, and at humiliating his uncle, Cumberland, who had recently rallied so handsomely to his support. In regard to Mackenzie, Bute's brother, the Cabinet was adamant. The worried King said that he "should disgrace himself if he did it," but, with great reluctance, he finally yielded. "George the Third," wrote Walpole, "is the true Successor of George the Second, and inherits all his grandfather's humiliations—indeed, they are attended with circumstances a little more cutting. The Regency Bill, not quite calculated with that intent, has produced four regents, King Bedford, King Halifax, King Grenville and King Twitcher."

This was the type of situation to produce a very bad psychological effect on the King, who was already morbidly unstable—a dilemma that could be solved only by a humiliating curtailment of power and the sacrifice of personal loyalties. He felt as though a group of ruffians had bound him hand and foot. The following day, May 23, the physicians were ordered in attendance. "At last the King opened the door himself and called them in. He gave Sir William Duncan his hand to feel his pulse which was quick, but bid him not mind it, because he had been hurried for some days past, but that he had eaten very little and had no fever. He inquired earnestly of Sir Clifton Wintringham how the Duke of Cumberland did after all his fatigue, and if he stood it well, and that for his part, he had never slept above two hours for several days past. The physicians were appointed to see His Majesty again on Sunday."

On May 24 Grenville found the King "very gloomy and with an air of great dissatisfaction." According to Elliott's diary, on Sunday, May 26, he "continued at Richmond, his mind so agitated that he did not choose to take the sacrament that day; nor was there any drawing-room." In a few days the King seemed to be himself again.

On June 12 the Duke of Bedford, before going to his country estate at Woburn, harshly remonstrated with the King, "upon the little coun-

tenance he showed to his Ministry." During this recital, or rather reading, for the lecture was delivered from manuscript, George kept his temper with great difficulty. In fact, he later said that had he not broken out in a profuse perspiration his indignation would have suffocated him. Shortly thereafter secret negotiations were again undertaken with Temple and Pitt. Temple persisted in his refusal to enter a new government and Pitt hesitated to go in without him. Temple declined to give the grounds for his refusal, except to state that they were "of a tender and delicate nature." Whether he meant that he did not want to displace his brother, George Grenville, who was then Prime Minister, or whether he did not wish to be dwarfed in a new Ministry by his great brother-in-law, Pitt, is still an unsolved question. Pitt's unwillingness to act without Temple was put on the basis of his health. He said he was not well enough to attend regularly upon his Majesty, and that he would trust no one but Temple to act in this capacity for him. Pitt had also declared that he would be unwilling to include any former Prime Ministers in his Cabinet. The King begged his uncle to emancipate him from his present advisers, now considered by him "not otherwise than jailors." Cumberland finally got Newcastle to form a government out of disjointed sections of the Whig party, under the young and wealthy Marquis of Rockingham. Not until July 12 had Rockingham's ministry taken definite enough form for the King to dismiss the Grenville Cabinet. The King told Grenville that ". . . he had found himself too much constrained, and that when he had anything proposed to him, it was no longer as counsel, but what he was to *obey*." Although Cumberland held no office, he dominated the new ministry until his death, October 31, 1765.

Bute was still a political outcast. George III could not risk the odium and jealousy which a public relationship with him would create. The King was still secretly consulting his old mentor on affairs of political importance, even though the Rockingham government had demanded promises from him that he would not consult Bute. The royal letters began to take on a more formal tone; they gave evidence that George III's dependence on Bute was weakening.

During the Rockingham administration the King seemed more than ever afraid that he would be discovered corresponding with Bute. In a letter written during a cabinet crisis in May, 1766, he exhorts him to exercise particular caution. "I beg an answer," he wrote, "but if possible shall when I have received that avoid writing till everything is

one way or other settled; for you must see how very material that caution is, besides I have reason to suspect that my sister watches when I deliver any letters to my mother, not from ill intention I hope, but curiosity and she has also said that during the great confusion in the winter that De Marche us'd frequently at five o'clock in the evening to bring letters from you on the days I went to my mother which she suppos'd must be for me." There was no secure refuge for the harassed monarch even in the midst of his family.

The King's indisposition still served as a barometer of royal tension. "We have no news but the King has again been indisposed," Jenkinson wrote on July 25. "He was blooded on Tuesday morning, his disorder was the same as that he had in the winter. Sir William Duncan said there was a very little fever and nothing to apprehend at present. The danger to be feared was a violent return in the winter. The King had no levee yesterday, but today he came to the drawing-room, and the Queen was there for the last time before lying in." There is little doubt that George III realized that his new government was ill-equipped to weather the stormy seas that lay ahead of it. The Marquis of Rockingham had been one of his Grooms of the Bedchamber; the King had once said of him, "I thought that I had not two men in my Bedchamber of less parts than Lord Rockingham." And it was well known that this new leader of the government had a neurotic dread of speaking in public.\* Charles Townshend, who still retained the Paymastership, spoke of the Rockingham ministry as "a lute-string administration fit only for summer wear." Chesterfield described it as an arch without a keystone.

In May, 1766, when Grafton resigned from the government because of Pitt's opposition to it, the King, almost in distraction, wrote the Earl of Bute, "Indeed I can neither eat nor sleep, nothing pleases me but musing on my cruel situation . . . if I am to continue to the life of agitation I have these three years, the next year there will be a Council [of] Regency to assist in that undertaking." George III was bitterly aware of his precarious mental state and he had insight into the factors which had induced it.

During this prolonged period of bad health, there had been a widespread fear that the King was developing scrofula or consumption. Although there was no clear medical knowledge of tuberculosis at that

\*In December, 1765, he wrote the King: "Lord Rockingham is ashamed to inform His Majesty that he did not attempt to speak on this occasion."

time, there was common belief that these two conditions had a tendency to occur in the same families.\* There were many victims of tuberculous infections in the royal family, and at that very time Frederick William, the youngest of the King's brothers, was suffering from a fatal tuberculous peritonitis.† Walpole, who cultivated the company of those who could bring him news, wrote of the King, "I fear his life is very precarious and there is even an apprehension of a consumption."

The fact that the King had suffered from a respiratory infection three years before formed one of the chief bases for the fear that the illness of 1765 was tuberculous.

Only after George III's death were frank disclosures of the real nature of the 1765 illness published. In John Watkins' *Memoir of the Duke of York*, published in 1827, there occurs this reference: "At the beginning of 1765 the Monarch was suddenly attacked by an affection of the brain, evidently the effect of intense anxiety, originating in the political feuds which continued for some years to disquiet the Kingdom after the peace. The situation of the royal patient, then at Kew, was carefully concealed from the public." Adolphus, in his *History of England*, did not reveal its true character until the appearance of his 1840 edition, three quarters of a century after the disorder. "I did not mention this fact in former editions of this work," he wrote, "because I knew that the King and all who loved him were desirous that it should not be drawn into notice. So anxious were they on this point that, Smollett having intimated it in his *Complete History of England*, the text was revised in the general impression. A very few copies in the original form were disposed of and they are now very rare."‡

\*Medical science has now indisputably proved that one is an infection of the lymph glands and the other of the lungs by the tubercle bacillus.

†An early biographer relates: "The disorder of this amiable youth was rather remarkable for one so young; being an obstinate ascites, or dropsy of the belly. He had undergone the operation of tapping in the course of the summer, but the relief afforded by this evacuation proved momentary; and the complaint returned with aggravated symptoms."

‡The Public Library of the City of Boston has two such copies. They are the fifth volume of Smollett's *Complete History* and appeared in 1765. This volume covered the reign of George III up to July 1, 1765. In it there appears this notice of the illness, "Towards the spring of the year his Majesty was attacked with an illness, which perhaps tho' not dangerous, filled the public with prodigious apprehensions, which perhaps were encreased by the very means made use of to save appearances; as nothing of certainty could be gathered from the public papers, but that the state of his health was precarious." Later issues of this work made no mention whatever of the 1765 illness of the King.

## CHAPTER VIII



*"I am more and more grieved at the accounts of America. Where this spirit will end is not to be said."*

GEORGE III

DURING THE LATTER HALF of 1765, George III's health was good. Temporarily freed from pressing worries of state, he was able to devote himself to his growing family and the simple domestic life which delighted him. His marriage with Charlotte, though it had been far from glamorous in the beginning, was working out extremely well. Already the union had been blessed with three children, and their rearing was a matter of tender and devoted concern to both parents. The home life of the royal couple was just of the calm, dull, placid sort best calculated to appeal to the populace. George and Charlotte were, like the humblest shopkeeper in their realm, God-fearing, home-loving parents who watched over their young with conscientious devotion.

But soon the King's restless mind turned to a consideration of European politics. The letters and dispatches which he wrote at this time were vigorous and decisive. Although it was a relatively quiet period in domestic affairs, storm clouds were rolling in from across the Atlantic. They were darkening the horizon so gradually that very few took notice of them. The sovereign himself, with his conscientious application to the multitudinous duties of his office, was one of the first to recognize their disastrous portent. "I am more and more grieved at the accounts of America," he wrote to General Conway, one of his Secretaries of State, on December 5. "Where this spirit will end is not to be said. It is undoubtedly, the most serious matter that ever came before Parliament; it requires more deliberation, candour, and temper than I fear it will meet with."

By this time, detailed news was arriving of a congress of nine provinces which had met in New York and passed statesman-like resolu-

tions against the Stamp Act. On November 1, the day the Act went into effect, church bells tolled lugubriously throughout the colonies; flags were put at half-mast, and shops were shut. The Stamp Act, printed on broadsides, was sold with the superscription, "The folly of England, the ruin of America." The stamps were seized and burned. Since all legal documents had to be recorded on stamped paper, the law courts were practically unable to function. Riots were reported to be flaring up everywhere as soon as attempts were made to put the law into execution.

On December 17, Parliament was prematurely prorogued, according to the Royal Address, to consider "important occurrences" which had lately taken place in some of the colonies. The Rockingham government recognized its want of strength to deal with the serious situation. Its leader was continually after the King to admit William Pitt in any capacity in which he would come. He was the one great figure who could give the Ministry strength both at home and abroad.

The Cabinet was divided as to whether the Stamp Act should be repealed or merely modified. The King, from whom Barrington, the Secretary of War, and Northington, the Lord Chancellor, awaited positive orders, was cautiously noncommittal. In the Commons, Grenville blasted away furiously at the measured terms in which the King, in his Address from the Throne, had described the rebellion in America.\*

Pitt's remarkable speech in defense of the colonies was delivered on January 14, 1766. At the end of January, Edmund Burke made his maiden speech in Parliament, advocating repeal of the Stamp Act, and Benjamin Franklin defended the Petition for Repeal from the United Colonies Assembled in Congress.

Lord Harcourt suggested to the King that if he would make his view public, the repeal of the Act might be prevented. George replied that even though he had promised to support his ministers, he was unwilling to direct parliamentary opinion. At an earlier date he had not hesitated to exert pressure on Parliament, as well as on his ministers, in

\*Charles Townshend echoed these violent anti-American sentiments, only later to change his principles. In reference to his vacillation one of the newspapers said, "We hear the right honorable Charles Townshend is indisposed at his house in Oxfordshire, of a pain in his side; but it is not said in which side." Such fabricated news items were not rare in the eighteenth century. They antedated political newspaper cartoons, which could not then be effectively reproduced because of deficiencies in printing.



regard to General Warrants,\* and subsequently he exhibited no such scruples in regard to the Royal Marriage Act, the East India Bill and Catholic Toleration. The fact that he refused to influence the action of Parliament, in this case, is evidence that he himself had no firm conviction on the question.

On February 1, in the midst of all the intense political excitement and perplexity over America, George III had a relapse of his illness. "The King," Grenville wrote on that date, "sent for his physicians, having a little cold; but he was blooded, looked flushed and heated, but had not much fever." On the 2nd he recorded in his Diary: "The King did not go to the Drawing-room, he had still some feverishness, but not much, and seemed in a good deal of agitation, and burst out into an expression before the physicians, saying he was willing to do anything for the good of his people, if they would but agree among themselves." This was apparently a psychological projection—his real concern was not over the indecisiveness of others but over his own inability to come to a decision in regard to the Stamp Act. It was reported that the King had told Lord Strange that ". . . his name had been unjustly made use of, as if he wished repeal of the Stamp Act; that he was so far from doing it that he wished the Act to stand, but with such modifications as Parliament should judge necessary." On hearing this, the Marquis of Rockingham declared that the King had spoken to him in favor of repeal. He recorded the monarch's words as he had remembered them; when this contradictory statement was submitted to him, George attested to its accuracy.

On February 3, despite the fact that the King was reported better, there was no levee. He wrote to the Chancellor, "This hour is perhaps one of the most critical ever known in this country; but I hope Providence will steer me through it with honour . . . my headache is not abated, nor my feverish complaint." "The King was better," Grenville recorded on the 4th, "and seemed in great spirits in the morning when his physicians saw him."

According to Grenville's information, Lord Bute spent four hours with George on February 8. Bute met with the other leaders of the

\*It is of interest that Henry Conway, who had been penalized by the monarch for his vote on General Warrants, was actually given a cabinet post in the Rockingham government. He and the other officers who had been stripped of their army rank because of their votes on this question were restored to their former military stations. This particular type of royal bludgeoning was never resorted to again by George III.

faction against repeal two days later and told them how "he lamented the unhappy state of the King," but at the same time publicly assured them that he never saw his "Master, the King."

Another change in Ministry was being seriously debated by the King during the early months of 1766. Rockingham was a participant in some of the discussions. The inclusion of Pitt was naturally the central theme of the conferences. The "Great Commoner" was at this time in political retirement, and described himself as "The hermit of Somersetshire," but he had intimated to Charles Townshend that he might consider resumption of his post. The young King feared that the price he would be required to pay would be too high. He felt sure that it would necessitate the sacrifice of loyal, incompetent but comfortably pliable advisers, and the substitution of dominant men who would wrest from his hands the helm of the ship of state. Moreover, he feared that Pitt would enter upon the negotiations to form a Ministry with dramatic zest, only to drop them suddenly upon some whim. The King was unwilling to risk being stultified in this way. On January 9, 1766, he wrote, "Lord Rockingham . . . I have revalued, most coolly and attentively, the business now before me, and am of opinion that so loose a conversation as that of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Townshend is not sufficient to risk either my dignity or the continuance of my administration by a fresh treaty with that gentleman, for if it should miscarry, all public opinion of this ministry would be destroyed by such an attempt." George III also feared that Pitt might go to undesired lengths to placate the rebellious colonists. The King rejected the Duke of Grafton's offer to write to Pitt in the monarch's name, seeking ". . . to hear his opinion on the American affairs whenever he came to town." The King finally counselled Lord Rockingham to see Pitt but cannily advised him ". . . to avoid a long conversation, by saying your business only permits you to call for a few minutes. Be extremely firm, but civil in what you say." Grafton was also authorized to approach Pitt. The King's judgment was confirmed. Pitt again proved too evasive and volunteered no definite assurance as to his policies.

While the change in ministry was being considered, popular opinion for and against the repeal of the Stamp Act began to crystallize. The clamor for repeal from the commercial interests in England became almost as vociferous as that from the colonists themselves. Sir George Savile, a member of Parliament and a true Yorkshireman, wrote to Rockingham, "Our trade is hurt. What the devil have you been doing?

For our part we don't pretend to understand your politics and American matters, but our trade is hurt; pray remedy it, and a plague on you if you won't."

Benjamin Franklin's masterful and courageous testimony at his examination before the Bar of the House of Commons, on January 27, won him great acclaim in many quarters. When he was asked whether the Americans would pay the Stamp Tax if it were moderated, he replied, "No, never, unless compelled by force of arms." "What is now their pride?" was the next question. "To wear their old clothes over again till they can make new ones," said Franklin.

The Repeal Bill, vitiated by the Declaratory Act which asserted England's moral and legal right to tax its colonies, was introduced in Parliament on February 21. In the early hours of the next morning it passed the Commons by the surprising vote of 275 to 167. At 4:30 A.M., Pitt wrote in exultation to his wife of his great triumph. It was, in truth, a personal victory and it proved his pre-eminence among the statesmen of his time.\*

On March 17 the Repeal Bill passed the House of Lords with a majority of 34. On the 18th it received the royal assent. Although the popular response was very favorable, it weakened rather than strengthened the government. No one considered it as an achievement of the Rockingham Cabinet, since it was known to have been accomplished by Pitt, who was neither a member nor a supporter of the Ministry. It had made his participation in the government a necessity. Grafton, the Secretary of State, resigned when Rockingham declared that ". . . he would never advise his Majesty to call Mr. Pitt into his closet, that this was a fixed resolution to which he would adhere."

The Ministry struggled on, giving evidence of a liberalism which found no royal sympathy. The hateful cider tax was repealed, and General Warrants were declared by Parliament to be illegal. George was further irritated by the government's failure to have Parliament grant an allowance for his younger brothers. As proof of his disfavor, Rockingham was informed that there would be no new appointments to the peerage. In July, the Earl of Northington, one of the King's Friends, resigned the Chancellorship because of a ministerial quarrel.

In a very friendly letter written on July 7, the King invited Pitt to form a new Ministry. The Rockingham group laid the blame for this

\*Lord Charlemont wrote, "Heavens, what a fellow is this Pitt! I had his bust before, but nothing less than his statue will content me now."

move upon the insidious influence of Bute. In a letter written to Bute immediately after the Ministry was formed, George III acknowledged that he had considered Bute's advice, given him a few months earlier, that he form his new Ministry about Pitt or Grenville. He said that he determined to call upon the former because "Mr. Grenville had too grossly deceived me, that it can be easily obliterated."

This letter is important not so much because of its bearing upon the formation of the second Pitt Ministry but because it marks the ending of relations between Bute and George III. For a decade, first as Prince and then as King, George III had been utterly dependent upon the Earl of Bute. During 1765 and 1766 the King's letters, although still very friendly, lacked their old emotional warmth: "my dearest friend" gave way to "my dear friend" or "my d. friend." In the letter of July 12, 1766, George informed Bute, in a very straightforward way, that he had wished to get in touch with him in regard to the new government, but that he had come to feel that "promises extorted" at the formation of the Rockingham Ministry constrained him. Bute waited a month, until the hurt produced by the letter had lessened, to send his answer. It was an hysterical outpouring of wounded pride, filled with lamentations over his mistreatment by his Prince and the rest of mankind. This was too much for the King. Suddenly, at the age of twenty-eight, he emancipated himself.

True to his policy of non-party government, Pitt created a heterogeneous cabinet which Burke, a strong supporter of Rockingham, aptly characterized as "a tessellated pavement without cement, here a bit of black stone and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers, King's Friends and Republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies." The King had great hopes from this government. One of the few fundamental points on which he was in agreement with his great minister was the desirability of a non-party government. Here was the theory finally put into practice.

The populace was stunned when Pitt, their idol, accepted a peerage. On July 29, George III made him Viscount Pitt of Burton Pynsent and Earl of Chatham. The City of London had planned a gala celebration of his return to office, but when the news came out that he had accepted a title it was cancelled. It is difficult to understand why Pitt accepted a peerage at this time when he had refused one a few years earlier. George III was a shrewd political strategist. He knew that he had temporarily weakened Pitt's position three years before, when he

granted his wife a pension and a title. There could be no doubt that at this time Pitt had to have his place in any new government. George preferred, if possible, to obtain the magical influence of Pitt's name without giving him a position of dominance in which he would totally eclipse every one, including the King himself. He preferred having the lion after his teeth had been drawn. In the House of Lords, Pitt's parliamentary influence would be far less powerful than in the House of Commons. His great speeches would no longer be on every man's lips, for strangers and news reporters were barred from the august House of Lords.

Pitt's reply to the King's letter opening the negotiations for the formation of the new Ministry had been fulsome and sycophantic. "Penetrated with the deepest sense of your Majesty's boundless goodness to me," it began, "and with a heart overflowing with duty and zeal for the honour and happiness of the most gracious and benign Sovereign. . . ." It must have suggested that his vanity was vulnerable, for flatterers can be flattered. Pitt was too astute to have failed to realize that the acceptance of a peerage would weaken his position. However, he was so great an egotist that he minimized its effect. The young King had foreseen the result more clearly. Torrents of abuse flowed upon the head of the great statesman. "The City," Sir Robert Wilmot wrote, "have brought in their verdict of *felo de se* against William, Earl of Chatham." Chesterfield termed Pitt's elevation to the peerage his "fall upstairs."\*

The new Pitt Ministry, which had had so long and painful a birth, turned out to be a great failure. In March Chatham, who, like his sovereign, was a sufferer from recurrent attacks of manic-depressive insanity, became very ill. Grafton, a man of mediocre abilities, was too much addicted to horse racing and too greatly enamoured of his pretty

\*An almost solitary epigram was published in his defense:

"The Tories, 'od rat 'em,  
Abuse my Lord Chatham,  
For what—for commencing a peer,  
But is it not hard  
He should lose his reward,  
Who has purchas'd a title so dear?

"In every station  
Mr. Pitt serv'd the nation,  
With a noble disdain of his pelf;  
Then where's the great crime,  
When he sees a fit time,  
If a man should for once serve himself?"

Nancy Parsons to guide the government efficiently. Or as Walpole put it, "The Duke of Grafton like an apprentice, thinking the world should be postponed to a W . . . and a horse race. . . ." In consequence, the ministerial body was left to function without a head. Its most active member was the witty and uncertain Charles Townshend, who was recklessly scheming to become the real leader of the government.\* As Chancellor of the Exchequer, on May 13, 1767, he announced in the House of Commons that ". . . he knew the mode by which a revenue might be drawn from the Americans without giving them offence." He then outlined his new revenue bill which provided for an importation tax on glass, paint, paper, tea, etc. It passed the Commons easily and only Camden vigorously opposed it in the House of Lords. This measure had been conceived by Townshend and had not even been submitted to his fellow cabinet ministers before it was introduced. Its effect in America proved almost as harmful as the Stamp Act.

It cannot be claimed that George III's insanity was responsible for the loss of the American Colonies. That Chatham's insanity had such an effect can be asserted with more justification. Chatham's incapacitating illness, which lasted from the spring of 1767 to the summer of 1769, came at a crucial time in Anglo-American affairs. It is true that even at the time his illness began, the relations between the colonies and the mother country were already very seriously strained, but the die had not been cast. It is safe to assume, on the basis of Chatham's earlier and subsequent pronouncements on America, that he would have devised means of assuaging the colonists' wounded feelings rather than further infuriating them with such stupidities as Townshend devised. Chatham was the one Englishman who had the political vision and the world-wide influence and popularity to prevent the disaster. Moreover, his incapacity led to Lord North's accession to power, and because of North's complete subservience to the King's will, it made the American Revolution and its outcome inevitable. Hobhouse goes so far as to assert that had Chatham's death not come in 1778, he and his allies would even then have wrested the power from North and the King and stopped the war.

Chatham's illness soon became generally recognized as a mental dis-

\*George III had a very low opinion of this minister. In one letter to Bute he described him as "that vermin." In another, he said, ". . . he ever was and ever will be so fickle that no man can depend on him."

order.\* It was considered to be a manifestation of the gout, from which he was known to be a chronic sufferer. Doctor Anthony Addington, his physician, displaying a sound knowledge of the immediate cause of an attack of gout, labored to produce this malady by prescribing a diet rich in meats and spirituous liquors. He hoped to drive the noxious humor into the joints and thereby rid the nervous system of it.†

Chatham had always been a neurotic person, and in his great egotism he humored rather than curbed his abnormalities. He was very fond of eating chicken; in consequence, one was kept cooking day and night so that he could indulge his appetite at any moment. He constructed a serpentine passageway between his children's quarters and his own, in order to prevent the penetration of any noise. He impulsively moved from one house to another in pursuit of quiet. At times he lived very extravagantly, driving about in a silver and blue liveried coach, drawn by six white horses and attended by ten outriders—a display that only a few of the great moneyed families could afford. When he inherited Sir William Pynsent's estate he had great quantities of shrubbery planted by torchlight so that there would be no delay. On moving to North Kent he bought up all of the neighboring houses to prevent noises and had a forest of cypresses brought from London to cover a bleak hill. Once when travelling he insisted that all of his servants have a meal with fourteen dishes. These prodigal and ill-afforded expenditures, recurring periodically, suggest that Pitt was subject to hypomanic reactions, in which extravagance is often the dominant symptom.

At forty-five he had had a rather severe depression for which he went to Tunbridge Wells. His companion, West, wrote at that time of his anxiety “. . . at the extreme dejection which appears today in Mr. Pitt from a night passed entirely without sleep. . . . While he continues under this oppression, I am afraid it will be impossible for me to leave him, as he fancies me of the greatest use to him as a friend and comfiter.” Although Pitt had frequent periods of bad health, no

\*Chatham's family history was replete with instances of instability; it was marked chiefly by furious outbursts of temper. One of his sisters, Elizabeth Villiers, was subject to attacks of manic-depressive insanity.

†Today there is no recognized connection between gout and manic-depressive insanity. But there are some who believe that the tendency for an individual to develop this type of mental disorder is dependent upon his metabolism. There exists, for example, a rather high correlation between the occurrence of diabetes and manic-depressive insanity in individuals and in families.

serious and prolonged mental illness occurred until the trials and tribulations of his second administration began in his fifty-ninth year. Whether he worried greatly over the reaction at his having accepted the peerage we do not know.

In the fall of 1766 there was a bad harvest and emergency orders were passed forbidding the export of grain. The Bedford and Grenville factions united in attacking this measure as unnecessary and high-handed. Some defections in the Ministry occurred, the most serious being the resignation of Saunders, the First Lord of the Admiralty. During the Christmas recess, Chatham went to Bath in the hope that the waters would rid him of his "cursed gout." When Parliament reassembled on January 16, 1767, he was lying behind tightly closed doors in the Castle Inn at Marlborough. He developed a phobia for business and was unapproachable even by Grafton, who was helplessly begging for counsel. By the beginning of March, there had been some improvement and Chatham returned to his home at Northend, Hampstead. The King then dispatched a letter to his minister which was far from reassuring. He informed him of the governmental intrigues and difficulties and presented his views on the illness, which he recognized as a nervous or mental disorder. "During your severe confinement," he said in the letter, "I have laid great share of its duration to the Uneasiness you have felt from considering how necessary your presence was for my Service & that of the Public." But even this letter failed to goad the great leader into activity. He promptly informed the worried monarch that he was still "out of Condition to attend his Majesty's Gracious Presence." In a few days the Earl had moved to his town house in Bond Street. The King then made another epistolatory effort to stimulate him.

After coming to London, Chatham became rapidly worse and had to return to Hampstead. His depression grew profound. Grafton felt impotent to carry on the government and on May 29 informed the King that he would have to resign, since Chatham had written him that he was too sick to see him or even send him instructions. The next day George replied, "Richmond Lodge, 18 min. past 11 A.M., May 30th, 1767, Duke of Grafton, . . . Though deeply concerned at the note you have wrote me, and in the most agitated state of mind, yet harbouring the most affectionate esteem for you, I think it necessary that you should come this evening at any time convenient to you." At 34 minutes past 2:00 the King wrote to Chatham. "No one," he



begins, "has more cautiously avoided writing to you than myself during your late indisposition; but the moment is so extremely critical that I cannot possibly delay it any longer." He then recounts the intrigue of that "hydra faction, which has never appeared to the height it now does." He tells Chatham that it is composed of "your relations [Grenville and Temple], the Bedfords, and the Rockinghams." He urges him to see Grafton: "Your duty and affection for my person, your own honour, call on you to make an effort: five minutes' conversation with you would raise his spirits for his heart is good; mine, I thank heavens, wants no raising." He then makes a remarkable offer: "If you cannot come to me tomorrow, I am ready to call at North End." The letter concludes, "Whilst I have sixty-five present and thirty proxies in the House of Lords ready to stand by me, besides a majority of 151 since that, in the House of Commons against 84, though the Secretary of State [Shelburne] and the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Charles Townshend] were in the minority, I think the game easy if you either come out or will admit very few people."

The somewhat confused contents of the letter and of others written at this time indicate the tense, agitated state of the King. In reading George III's letters and correlating them with data pertaining to his mental health, one gains the impression that his clarity of expression serves as a fairly reliable index of his mental condition. He himself was aware of this connection, at least so far as his calligraphy was concerned.\*

Finally the King's ruthless persistence overcame Chatham's horror for transacting business and, in answer to the letter of May 30, he notified his sovereign that despite "illness, weakness, and affliction" he would permit Grafton to come to him. The King's political judgment proved sound; the short visit inspirited Grafton and gave, temporarily, new vitality to the government. Grafton has left his impression of that momentous visit. "His [Chatham's] nerves and spirits were affected to a dreadful degree, and the sight of his great mind, bowed down and thus weakened by disorder, would have filled me with grief and concern, even if I had not long borne a sincere attachment to his person and character. The confidence he reposed in me

\*On the day that the North Ministry finally collapsed, March 27, 1782, he wrote a number of letters. One was to the Duke of Montagu and was undated, a fact in itself suggesting abnormality in this super-methodical person. In this letter to Montagu he said, "The agitation of my mind you may discover by the badness of my writing."

demanding every return on my part, and it appeared like a cruelty to me to have been urged by any necessity to put a man I valued, to so great a suffering." Chatham then wrote one of his very humble letters to the King, entreating him to be spared a royal audience: "The Honour and Weight of such an Audience wou'd be more than he cou'd sustain in his present extreme weakness of Nerves and Spirits." Having accomplished his major objective, the King sent a solicitous reply, assuring him that for the moment the interview with Grafton was sufficient and asking to be informed of the effect of the Treasury Lord's visit on the Earl. Lady Chatham answered this inquiry, since her Lord was "totally incapable from an increase of illness to use his pen," and informed the monarch that the Earl was now under "utter disability" to make any further efforts.

Lord Mansfield found that the incompetence and instability of the second Pitt administration was very unsettling to the King. Deeply concerned, he wrote Grenville of ". . . the sad disordered state of things in general, and the languid turn of the King's mind, who seemed indifferent to everything, tired of change and yet dissatisfied with the Ministers and their Administration. . . ."

The King's restlessness in regard to Chatham's illness impelled him to write him ten days later: "The dry Weather that has now continued a week must undoubtedly have greatly assisted in removing the weakness from the long continuance of Your late indisposition; I therefore wish to learn how you now find yourself and whether you do not flatter Yourself soon to be in a situation to see Me." "He is," Lady Chatham dismally replied, "as yet, utterly incapable of the smallest efforts of thought, every attempt toward which is, in his physician's opinion, preventive of his Cure." On June 15 the King urged Lord Chatham to call one of his physicians, Sir Clifton Winttingham, to Doctor Addington's assistance. This the Earl politely declined to do, expressing the fullest confidence in his own physician, who had assured him that he should fully recover "with proper time."

As the summer wore on Chatham's depression grew more profound. Thomas Whately, in his letter of July 29 to George Grenville, presents the portrait of a typical severe melancholic: "He sits most of the day leaning his head down upon his hands which are rested on the table. Lady Chatham does not continue generally in the room; if he wants anything, he knocks with his stick; he says little even to her if she comes in; and is so averse to speaking, that he commonly inti-

mates his desire to be left alone, by some signal rather than by an expression. The physicians, however, say there is nothing in his disorder which he may not recover, but do not pretend to say there is any prospect of its being soon."

In January, 1768, Chatham was still unequal to the task of writing to the King. By October he had recovered sufficiently to do so. At that time he begged to be allowed to resign, having been informed of the contemplated removal of Lord Shelburne, who was considered by Grafton and the King as disaffected, and being himself still incapable of an active participation in affairs. To this George III replied on October 14: "I think I have a right to insist on your remaining in my Service" to resist "the torrent of Factions this Country so much labours under." This provoked another plea for a merciful release: "My health is so broken, that I feel all Chance of recovery will be entirely precluded by my continuing to hold the Privy Seal." The King finally yielded and accepted the resignation. Lord Grafton, who had been First Lord of the Treasury in Chatham's administration, became head of the government.

Little is known of the progress of Lord Chatham's illness during the ensuing months. By the beginning of summer he was quite well. With his wonted use of the dramatic, he suddenly reappeared at the King's Levee on July 7. "He himself," Walpole informed his friend, Conway, "in *propria persona*, and not in a strait waistcoat walked into the King's Levee this morning and was in the closet twenty minutes after the levee. . . . The deuce is in it if this is not news. Whether he be King, Minister, Lord Mayor, or Alderman, I do not know." It soon became evident that Chatham could not be looked to for support since he was forming an alliance with his brothers-in-law, Temple and Grenville, and with the Rockingham faction. At the opening of Parliament in January, 1770, he began belaboring Grafton and his government with his old effectiveness. He even attacked the sovereign, asserting that it was not George III but his mother who misruled the nation.

To George's added embarrassment, Lord Chancellor Camden, while still a member of the Cabinet, joined Chatham in his attacks on governmental policy. In a speech before Parliament, he declared: "I meant not to be trammelled by his Majesty (I beg pardon, by his Ministers.) I have suffered to be so too long. For sometime I have beheld with silent indignation the arbitrary measures of the ministers. I have

drooped and hung down my head in council, and disapproved by my looks those steps which I knew my avowed opposition could not prevent. . . . A spirit of discontent has spread into every corner of the Kingdom, and is every day increasing. If some methods are not devised to appease the clamours so universally prevalent, I know not whether the people, in despair, may not become their own avengers, and take the redress of grievances into their own hands." This diatribe against the government, delivered in office by the government's second highest official, resulted in the Chancellor's prompt dismissal. Ten days later, on January 28, 1770, Lord Grafton, the head of the government, disdainfully threw up his post, declaring: "His Majesty was more forward to dictate his will to me than to inquire first my opinion on any measure."

Lord North, an old friend of the King's, who had been Chancellor of the Exchequer for more than two years, was persuaded to lead the new government. The King found great difficulty in inducing any lawyer of eminence to accept the Lord Chancellorship. The Great Seal was offered to Charles Yorke, the son of the famous Chancellor, Lord Hardwicke. But even the King's demands and the importunings of Yorke's beautiful and ambitious wife could not get him to desert the principles of his political chief, the Marquis of Rockingham. "The Seals," Shelburne wrote, "are to go a begging but I hope there will not be found in the Kingdom a wretch so base and mean-spirited as to accept of them on the conditions on which they must be offered." But the King was a stubborn man and a singularly persuasive talker. Charles Yorke finally acceded to his pleas. He was Lord Chancellor for three days; then he committed suicide.

## CHAPTER IX



*"What is a King, a man condemned to bear the public burthen of the Nation's care."*

PRIOR

UNANNOUNCED, JOHN WILKES, George III's squint-eyed *bête noire*, had suddenly deserted his place of exile and noisily reappeared in London early in February, 1768. After his outlawry, he had, for a time, lived quite content in Paris on the £1000 a year contributed by the Rockingham group, consoled by the charms of a well-known courtesan, Mme. Corradine. But this was too placid an existence for a young firebrand. He made two secret trips to London during 1766, the first during the administration of Lord Rockingham and the second during the Ministry of Chatham and Grafton. The Rockingham government was in too enfeebled a condition to accept the dangerous task of effecting his return to grace. When Grafton became First Lord of the Treasury in the next government, Wilkes' hopes ran high, for he had been one of Grafton's warmest supporters. He beseeched the new leader to obtain for him a royal pardon from his "cruel and unjust prescription." Grafton made mention of the matter to the King, who treated it as though it were beneath his notice. Wilkes was too realistic to be shocked when he found that Grafton, the minister, was not the same man as Grafton, the politician in opposition.

Two years later Wilkes summoned his courage, in which he was never deficient, and returned to the arena. From London he wrote a personal letter to the King assuring him of his loyalty and veneration. This went unanswered. He then announced himself as one of the seven parliamentary candidates from the city. On losing this election, he stood for the county of Middlesex, and, supported by the Earl of Temple and the Duke of Richmond, was promptly elected on March 28. Had there been anything like general suffrage, he would have

succeeded in the city, for the poor working people were with him to a man.

The Middlesex election was the beginning of a series of riots like those attending the Wilkes struggle four years before: "By five in the morning a very large body of Weavers, etc., took possession of Piccadilly, and the roads and turnpikes leading to Brentwood, and would suffer no one to pass without blue cockades, and papers inscribed, 'No. 45, Wilkes and Liberty.' They tore to pieces the coaches of Sir W. Beauchamp Proctor, and Mr. Cooke, the other candidates." At one in the morning, after victory had been assured, the mob attacked Lord Bute's house in Audley Street. The rioting went on for a few days and then stopped. Although the government was very anxious to invalidate the election, they could hardly do so on the basis of the riots which were, in truth, not very different from those attending many of the elections of that period. Wilkes had seen to it that no serious disturbances occurred in the vicinity of the polling places.

Horace Walpole grasped the situation much more clearly than the men in power. "In my opinion," he wrote, "the House of Commons is the place where he can do least hurt, for he is a wretched speaker and will sink to contempt. . . . Wilkes is undone; and, though he has had great support, his patrons will be sick of maintaining him. He must either sink to poverty or a jail, or commit new excesses, for which he will get knocked on the head."

On April 20 Wilkes surrendered himself to the Solicitor to the Treasury to determine what punishment, if any, should be meted out to him as a result of his convictions four years before. The hearing had to be postponed because of a legal technicality. When the proper warrant was issued a week later, the Sheriff's Officers hesitated to put it into execution. The idea of men hesitating or fearing to do their duty, and particularly against Wilkes, infuriated the King. He promptly wrote to Lord Weymouth, lamenting the fact "that so mean a set of men as the Sheriff's Officers can, either from timidity or interestedness, frustrate a due execution of the law. If he [Wilkes] is not soon secured, I wish you would inquire whether there is no legal method of quickening the zeal of the Sheriffs themselves." He inspired Lord North, the leader of his government, with his pronouncement, ". . . the expulsion of Mr. Wilkes appears to be very essential and must be effected." On April 27 Wilkes gave himself over to the Marshal of the King's Bench but was rescued by his cohorts from

the jailers while en route to prison. He soon freed himself from his enthusiastic saviours and voluntarily presented himself for commitment.

Angry crowds kept continually milling about the prison and George suggested the traverser's transfer to the Tower. No one was then less ready to follow Walpole's plan to neglect Wilkes and thereby prevent his martyrdom than George III. He was still too little of a realist to consider such a method. His attitude toward Wilkes was much like his attitude toward the rebellious colonists. Punishment must be meted out to law-breakers, and their delinquencies could not, under any circumstances, be overlooked. Those principles were among Augusta's fundamental teachings. Individuals with George III's need for security and with his neurotic demand for order become worshippers of those great bulwarks for the preservation of order—the law and the church. And such people often portray a courage that is born of a dread of their own timorousness; their weakness makes them strong. To Weymouth, the King wrote, "If a due firmness is shown with regard to this audacious criminal, this affair will prove a fortunate one by restoring a due obedience to the laws. But if this is not the case, I fear anarchy will continue till what every temperate man must dread, I mean an effusion of blood, has vanquished."

On May 7, Sergeant Glynn raised the question of the legality of outlawing his client, John Wilkes. Lord Mansfield heard the case but held it *sub curia* so that he could study the law. The mob felt that this was more legal chicanery to deprive them of the satisfaction of seeing their hero in Parliament when it opened. On May 10, when the session began, there were menacing mobs around Parliament and the King's Bench prison at St. George's Fields, where Wilkes was held. Lord Weymouth, the Secretary of State, had notified the local magistrates not to hesitate to employ the soldiery. Foolishly, a detachment from a Scotch regiment was stationed before the prison to keep the peace. The riot act was read and finally the mob was fired upon; four men and two women were killed and fifteen wounded. This became known in history as the "Massacre of St. George's Fields." Several sympathetic, or at least contemporaneous, demonstrations were connected with the rioting on behalf of Wilkes—something in the nature of a miniature general strike. Walpole wrote to Mann, "We have independent mobs, that have nothing to do with Wilkes, and who only take advantage of so favourable a season. The dearness of provisions incites, the hope of increase of wages allures, and drink puts them

in motion. The coal heavers began, and it is well it is not a hard frost, for they have stopped all coals coming to Town. The sawyers rose too, and at last the sailors who have committed great outrages in merchant ships and prevented them from sailing."

On June 8 Lord Mansfield, who was not a man of much personal courage, delighted the populace with an opinion an hour and a half in length, declaring Wilkes' outlawry illegal because of involved technicalities. The joy was short-lived, for ten days later Justice Yates sentenced Wilkes on his old convictions for sedition and obscene and blasphemous libels—the cases of the *North Briton*, Number 45 and the "Essay on Woman." He was fined and condemned to twenty-two months' imprisonment.

The indefatigable protestant was not to be quieted even by imprisonment. Letters, petitions, and manifestoes were issued in quick succession from jail. On December 10 he published in the *St. James Chronicle* a copy of the letter which Lord Weymouth had sent the magistrates in May and directly charged the ministry with having "planned and determined upon . . . the horrid massacre of St. George's Fields," which he described as a "hellish project brooded over by some infernal spirits without one moment's remorse." The publication of the letter and Wilkes' comments were voted "insolent, scurrilous and malicious libel" in the House of Commons. On February 2 the culprit was brought from prison to the Bar of the House. He was again utterly defiant. At 3:00 A.M., on February 4, 1769, on a motion that had been brought by Lord Barrington, he was expelled from the House of Commons for the second time by a vote of 219 to 137. Wilkes, though still in prison, was re-elected to Parliament by the voters of Middlesex in elections held in February, March, and April. In each case the election was declared void. In the March election a sawmill operator named Quigley had tried to oppose Wilkes but was manhandled and driven from the hustings. In the April contest the government put up as its candidate, Colonel Henry Luttrell of the Guards. He had no connection with Middlesex and his chief recommendation was his courage. The colonel had his life insured at Lloyd's Coffee-House before beginning his campaign. The election turned out to be unusually orderly, since charges had been made that the popular party could not triumph except by resort to violence. Wilkes polled 1143 votes, Luttrell 296.

After a long debate and by a majority of only 54, the House, in



what Burke characterized as "the fifth act of this tragi-comedy," declared Colonel Luttrell to have been duly elected as the representative from Middlesex. The next day the King drove to Westminster to close the session. All along the route he was greeted by the jeers of his people. It was generally recognized that the baiting of Wilkes was due to the personal enterprise of the King.

The men in Parliament who had shown real spirit in pressing Wilkes' prosecution were "King's Friends"—men like Barrington and Weymouth. It was obvious that their energy served as an index of their master's fanatical ardor. North, the first Lord of the Treasury, admitted that the prosecution of Wilkes had cost the government £100,000. George III rejoiced at Wilkes' exclusion from membership in Parliament. On the morning that it was voted he expressed his delight to Lord North. "The House of Commons," he said, "having in so spirited a manner felt what they owe to their own privileges as well as to the good order of this Country and Metropolis, gives me great satisfaction, and must greatly tend to destroy that outrageous licentiousness that has been so successfully raised by wicked and disappointed Men." Wilkes was elected a City Alderman while he was still serving his jail sentence. On his release in April, 1770, London wore its gala illuminations. On the Mansion House, in letters three feet high, gleamed the word "Liberty." London was in revolt against the sovereign.

The Wilkes affair became a symbol over which intense factional disputes raged for two years, producing a sharp cleavage between liberals and reactionaries. The distinction between Whigs and Tories had become nearly meaningless. The Whigs had been split into various political groups, oriented around a personality rather than a policy. But the Wilkes cause welded the adherents of Chatham, Temple, Grenville, and Rockingham into a formidable liberal opposition against which the King fought bitterly with threats, patronage, and bribery. The Court reached one of its lowest points in popularity. Petitions, protest meetings, and riots occurred frequently throughout England. Popular interest in basic political problems, such as the relationship of the elected representative to the Crown and to the electorate, reached a height never before approached in England. Burke insisted that petitions to the King were the most effective means of checking the autocratic and unconstitutional influence then in power.

Some seventeen counties, in addition to many cities and boroughs, sent up addresses to the Throne, complaining that the rights of freeholders had been violated. Many petitioned for a dissolution of Parliament. The government made frantic efforts to produce counter addresses, but only the universities, four counties, and a few cities responded. The motion for a loyal address, proposed in the Common Council of the City of London, was rejected by 141 to 21. The voice of popular opinion was overwhelming. Samuel Johnson, a pensioner and a staunch Tory, expressed the minority, reactionary attitude. "This petitioning," he said, "is a new mode of distressing government, and a mighty easy one. We are now disputing whether Middlesex shall be represented or not by a criminal from a jail. The only comfort left in such degeneracy is that a lower state can be no longer possible."

A group of merchants in the City signed an address of confidence to the King and started to march in a body to present it. They were thoroughly set upon by the mob and only a few bedraggled souls reached St. James's. An angry mob, singing "God Save Great Wilkes, our King," surged about the palace gate, escorting a hearse, in commemoration of the Massacre of St. George's Fields. Lord Talbot, the Steward, a man of courage and great strength, helped keep the mob at bay but had his staff of office broken in his hand. Five rioters were arrested, but the grand jury refused to find a true bill against them. The King complained bitterly of "the factious and partial conduct of the grand jury" and added, "If there be no means by law to quell riots, and if juries forget they are on their oath to be guided by facts not faction, this constitution must be overthrown and anarchy (the most terrible of all evils) must ensue." Luttrell could not go upon the streets for months. Colonel Barré made violent speeches in Parliament, pointing out that a disregard of petitions "might teach the people to think of assassination."

In April, 1770, the Lord Mayor and Livery of London presented a remonstrance to the King of tone and content such as had probably never before been used toward an English sovereign, except as a portent of revolution. "Under the same secret and malign influence which through each successive administration has defeated every good and suggested every bad intention," it read, "the majority of the House of Commons have deprived your people of their dearest rights. They have done a deed more ruinous in its consequences than the levying of ship-money by Charles I, or the dispensing power assumed by

James II. . . . Parliament is corruptly subservient to the designs of your Majesty's ministers." These were words singing defiance and bringing again to life the old charge of sinister domination by the Princess Dowager and the Earl of Bute. That George III did not receive this in good spirit is hardly to be wondered at. Later, the London Livery presented another address of the same character. When the King read an answer of disapprobation, the Lord Mayor Beckford, a fervent partisan of Chatham, harangued the Throne. As Walpole put it, ". . . this being an innovation, much discomposed the solemnity." The King could hardly contain himself; he grew so red that it was feared that he would have a stroke of apoplexy.

Wilkes' publication of the *North Briton* and its consequent heroic fame for the author acted as a great stimulus to political newspaper writing. During the first decade of George III's reign the character of the newspaper underwent a transition. There had been, for the most part, two types of publications—the ordinary non-partisan newspapers, which acted merely as purveyors of general news, and the political journals which existed for, and were supported by, partisan politics. The first group carried scarcely any political news. The latter group surreptitiously reported parliamentary proceedings with a distorting bias and dealt generously in political slander. During the Wilkes agitation, the ordinary newspaper began to devote a good deal of space to politics, chiefly in the form of letters to the editor under assumed names.

In January, 1769, there appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, one of the leading morning dailies, the first of a series of remarkable political letters under the signature of "Junius." The first of the Junius letters marked the author as no mean literary hireling. With a virulence of invective that has rarely been equalled, he mercilessly flayed the administration. It was evident that he was from the inner circle of politics; he was "in the know." In this letter his shafts were aimed chiefly at Grafton, Mansfield, and North. His voice at times had a gloomy and threatening sound: "After a rapid succession of changes, we are reduced to that state which hardly any change can mend. Yet there is no extremity of distress which of itself ought to reduce a nation to despair. It is not the disorder but the physician: it is not a casual concurrence of calamitous circumstances; it is the pernicious hand of government which alone can make a whole people desperate."

The letters of Junius appeared intermittently for three years. It is

hard to conceive the intense excitement with which their periodic publication was anticipated. The appeal of the letters was increased by the complete mystery surrounding their authorship. This was fully appreciated by Junius, who wrote in a letter to Wilkes, "At present there is something oracular in the delivery of my opinions. I speak from a recess which no human curiosity can penetrate; and darkness, we are told, is one source of the sublime. The mystery of Junius increases his importance." Each of the leading political figures of the day was under suspicion. Nathaniel Wraxall thought that they were the work of Single Speech Hamilton; Samuel Johnson considered them the product of his friend Edmund Burke, until Burke denied them. Books have been written about this great literary mystery. The form and content of each phrase has been sifted and scrutinized. Although it is now generally held that they were written by Sir Philip Francis, a clerk in the War Office, there is still no certainty as to the authorship.\*

In the first of Junius' published letters, his attitude toward the King was respectful, though he did not hesitate to inveigh against the secret and nefarious influence of the Dowager Princess and her favorite, the Earl of Bute. He blamed the desperate state of affairs on the ill-advised counsel given the Crown. From Junius' private correspondence and from portions of the letters for publication, which were censored by Woodfall, it is clear that Junius had a malign hatred for George III and derived a cruel satisfaction from the pain which he caused him. In his taunts to the King in regard to his mother's reputed frailties, he had a footnote which Woodfall omitted: "The Lady herself is now preparing for a different situation. Nothing keeps her alive but the horrible suction of toads.† Such an instance of Divine Justice would convert an atheist." In a private letter to Woodfall, he

\*The increase in the circulation rate of the *Public Advertiser* gives an index of the feverish interest which the letters aroused. The daily circulation prior to the time that the letters first appeared was about 2800. This steadily increased until the maximum of 4800 was reached on December 19, 1769, the day on which the "Letter to the King" was published. Moreover, it is probable that the size of this issue was limited by the restrictions in the process of printing rather than by the demand. To print 4800 copies of a four-page newspaper required four hand-presses to work at top speed for twelve hours. And many of the other newspapers reprinted the "Letters of Junius." Since a newspaper at this time cost at least 2½ d., every copy had many readers. It was part of the stock-in-trade of coffee houses and lactariums to have them for their patrons. It was also common practice for newspapers to be rented out for a penny.

†A common eighteenth-century treatment for external cancers.

explains the accusations of cowardice levelled against the King: "I must tell you (and with positive certainty) that our gracious —— is as callous as a stockfish to everything but the reproach of cowardice. That alone is able to set the humours afloat. After a paper of that Kind he won't eat meat for a week." In another letter to Wilkes he said, "I know for certain that the Duke of Cumberland is married to Luttrell's sister. The Princess Dowager and the Duke of Gloucester cannot live, and the odious hypocrite is *in profundis*. Now is your time to torment him with some Demonstration from the City."

Although, in the famous letter to the King, Junius did not publicly loose such venomous shafts, his arrows were barbed. "Discard these little, personal resentments," he wrote, "which have too long directed your public conduct. Pardon this man [Wilkes] the remainder of his punishment; and if resentment still prevails, make it, what it should have been long since, an act, not of mercy, but contempt. He will soon fall back into his natural situation; a silent senator, and hardly supporting the weekly eloquence of a newspaper. . . . He said more than moderate men would justify; but not enough to entitle him to the honour of your Majesty's personal resentment. The rays of royal indignation, collected upon him, served only to illuminate, and could not consume. . . . Hardly serious at first, he is now an enthusiast. The coldest bodies warm with opposition, the hardest sparkle in collision. . . . Is this a contention worthy of a King? Are you not sensible how much the meanness of the cause gives an air of ridicule to the serious difficulties into which you have been betrayed? The destruction of one man, has been now, for many years, the sole subject of your government; and, if there can be anything still more disgraceful, we have seen, for such an object, the utmost influence of the executive power, and every ministerial artifice exerted without success. Nor can you ever succeed, unless he should be imprudent enough to forfeit the protection of those laws to which you owe your crown." The letter closes on a more menacing note: "The name of Stuart, of itself, is only contemptible; armed with the sovereign authority their principles are formidable. The prince who imitates this conduct, should be warned by their example; and, while he plumes himself upon the security of his title to the Crown, should remember, that, as it was acquired by one revolution, it may be lost by another. . . . The same pretended power which robs an English subject of his birthright, may rob an English King of his Crown."

Immediately upon the publication of the letter to the King, the Attorney General prosecuted Henry Woodfall for publishing it, and Almon and Millar for reprinting it.\* Almon was tried first. He was found guilty of publishing and was fined only ten marks. Then Woodfall was tried. Lord Mansfield clearly indicated that it was the province of the judge and not of the jury to determine whether the letters were libelous. The jury was permitted to determine only who had published the material. They showed their sympathy for Woodfall by bringing in a special and irregular verdict, which resulted in a mistrial. Although no doubt existed as to Millar's republication of the letters, a jury brought in a "not guilty" verdict. The lawyers for the Crown were wise enough not to retry the case against Woodfall, since the course of public opinion had made it evident that they could not get a conviction. The failure to convict Woodfall was one of the important events in the struggle to prevent the autocratic domination of the Crown. It has served as a strong argument in defense of the jury system of trials.

Henry Woodfall's younger brother, William, editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, struck another blow in the interest of a free press which served as an irritant to the King. William was something of a phenomenon among news reporters.† His amazing memory enabled him to publish full reports of parliamentary proceedings, a practice which was strictly against the law. In February, 1771, Colonel George Onslow complained against Woodfall's illicit practice, and the House of Commons, despite misgivings on the part of the King, voted to proceed against him.

Although George III was sympathetic with the principles behind the prosecution, after the unhappy results of legal action against Wilkes and the publishers of the letter of Junius, he had learned to fear such procedures. "I do in the strongest manner recommend that every caution may be used against its becoming a serious affair," he wrote North, his Prime Minister. He advised him that it was his opinion, nevertheless, that it was "highly necessary that this strange

\*Although Junius had in earlier years accused the very wealthy Duke of Bedford of having been niggardly enough to sell the clothes of his dead son, and had maliciously criticized the morals of the Duke of Grafton and his wife, no action had been taken.

†Known as "Memory Woodfall," it was said that "without taking a note to assist his memory, without the use of an amanuensis to ease his labours, he has been known to write sixteen columns after having sat in a crowded gallery for as many hours without an interval of rest."

and lawless method of publishing Debates in the Papers should be put a stop to." The King said that he considered "the House of Lords as a Court of Record the best Court to bring such miscreants before, as it can fine as well as imprison; and as the Lords have broader shoulders to support any schism that this salutary measure may occasion in the minds of the vulgar."

The whole affair was bungled. William Woodfall and a group of printers were jailed. Three printers refused to surrender themselves to the authorities. Wilkes had apparently instigated the resistance. Having assumed his aldermanship after his release from prison, he was one of the three magistrates before whom the delinquents were brought after arrest. The other two were Lord Mayor Crosby and Alderman Oliver. The printers were released and in their place the messenger from the House of Commons, who had come to make the arrest, was committed to prison because the warrant which he had from the Speaker of the House was not backed by a City Magistrate's warrant. The case of the printers who had resisted arrest immediately became a *cause célèbre*. Each of the defendants was given £100 by the "Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights" for having "appealed to the law of the land, and not betrayed by submission the rights of Englishmen."

The King was furious. "The authority of the House of Commons is totally annihilated," he said, "if it is not in an exemplary manner supported tomorrow, by instantly committing the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver to the Tower." He added, "As to Wilkes, he is below the notice of the House. You know very well I was averse to meddling with the Printers, but now there is no retracting, the honour of the Commons must be supported."

The King's wishes as to Wilkes were not followed. He was ordered to appear at the bar of the House, while Lord Mayor Crosby and Alderman Oliver, being then members of the House, were ordered to attend in their places. Wilkes replied that he too was a member of the House, being a duly elected representative from Middlesex, and he refused to appear in any other capacity. The Lord Mayor and Oliver attended. The House acted illegally, voting to expunge from the Lord Mayor's minute-book the judicial record of their messenger's arrest. Chatham said this was "the act of a mob and not of a senate." Junius wrote, "Nothing remained but to attribute to their own vote a power of stopping the whole distribution of criminal and

civil justice." The Lord Mayor, who had acted during the hearings with great dignity, became ill. The King, with his usual impatience of delays and his lack of sympathy with illness, wrote, ". . . every delay in a breach of privilege of so enormous a kind, seems to indicate to the bystander a less attachment in the House of Commons to its own authority, than every well wisher can desire." The letters of Junius and personal experience had at last schooled the Monarch in how to handle Wilkes. "I owne," he wrote, "I could have wished that Wilkes had not been ordered before the House; for he must be in jail the next term [for debt] if not given new life by some punishment inflicted on him, which will bring him new Supplies."

The Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver were stupidly jailed in the Tower for six weeks. They became popular heroes. The Lord Mayor's carriage was drawn about by a deliriously enthusiastic populace. There were numerous riots, in one of which Lord North was nearly killed. The King was hissed and jeered on the streets and an apple was thrown into his coach. The leading members of the opposition went to the Tower in a procession of sixteen carriages to pay their respects to the prisoners. A great throng accompanied a hearse to Tower Hill and effigies of the King's mother, Lord Bute, and the leaders of the government were beheaded by chimney sweeps and burned. When released from the Tower, the prisoners were saluted with twenty-one guns by the Artillery Company. At night London was illuminated and the windows in the homes of government leaders broken.

Once more Wilkes' audacity triumphed. Three times he was ordered to appear before the bar of the House. Each time he refused. At last they put an ignominious end to the matter by ordering his attendance on a day when they were in adjournment. In July the "Supporters of the Bill of Rights" met at London Tavern. It was agreed that, "Whosoever seriously considers the conduct of the administration both at home and abroad, can hardly entertain a doubt, that a plan is formed to subvert the constitution." Further, it was agreed that the majority of the Members of Parliament were "in the pay of the Crown and should this corruption be once firmly rooted we shall be an undone people."

Wilkes, far from suffering through his defence of the printers, was elected Lord Mayor of London in 1774. He continued his opposition to the Crown, but the government's new method of paying little attention to him had its effect. In 1774, he was again returned unop-



posed for Middlesex, and was this time permitted to take his seat. His vigorous opposition to the government's war policy in America had little influence. In July, 1775, when the King issued a proclamation, declaring a state of open and armed rebellion in America, Wilkes would not let any one but the common town-crier announce it and refused to provide horses for the heralds. As the years wore on Wilkes lost his notorious reputation as a radical. By 1782 he had so far returned to the good graces of the more conservative leaders that the House of Commons voted 115 to 54 to expunge from its records the resolution passed thirteen years before, declaring him ineligible to sit in that body. When he became an old man he was a frequent attendant at the Court Levees, where he could be seen leaning on his cane and chatting with the sovereign he had many years before so bitterly attacked and harassed. This presents a picture of magnanimous relenting that is not frequently associated with George III. The softening power of time made transformations in both of these men.

What anguish George III suffered over the malevolent slanders that were continually spewed upon his royal mother, we cannot know. These calumnies appeared in such scandal sheets as the *Whisperer*, they served as ammunition for the diatribes of Wilkes and Junius, and they were declaimed in the senate halls. Even the noble Chatham, when he turned upon the government, stooped to such abuse. In the spring of 1770, in a speech before the House of Lords he drew an analogy between the relationship of Augusta with the Earl of Bute and that which had existed between Anne of Austria and her favorite, Cardinal Mazarin: "That favourite [Bute] is at the present moment abroad, yet his influence by his confidential agents, is as powerful as if he were at home. Who does not know the Mazarinade of France?—that Mazarin absent was Mazarin still? And what is there, I would ask, to distinguish the two cases?" A year later, during the heated debates over the Printers, Alderman Townshend spoke on the same subject in the House of Commons. He shouted that there was one aspiring woman who was allowed to dictate the evil policies of the government. "Does any gentleman wish to hear what woman I allude to?" he asked. "If he does I will tell him. It is the Princess Dowager of Wales. I aver we have been governed ten years by a woman. It is not the sex I object to but the government. Were we well ruled, the ruler would be an object of little significance. It is not the greatness

of the criminal's rank which should prevent you punishing the criminality."

Only death ended the baiting of the Dowager Princess. On November 19, 1771, King George wrote to his brother, William, the Duke of Gloucester, "My mother seems daily to lose ground, her speech grows less intelligible. She hourly amaciates and has dreadful faintings toward night which must soon put an end to a situation that it is almost cruel to wish to see her long continue in." In a subsequent letter he wrote that her physician, Doctor Pringle, "thinks her in a galloping consumption." Walpole gave an interesting account of the fortitude which she displayed in her last days: "Feb. 8, 1772, died Augusta Princess Dowager of Wales, the King's mother, aged fifty-two, of an abscess in the throat. . . . For the last three months her suffering had been dreadful and menacing her life, yet her fortitude was invincible, and she kept up to the last moment that disguise and reserve which predominated so strongly in her character. She not only would not acknowledge her danger to her children, servants, and physicians, but went out in her coach. On Thursday, the 6th, her approaching end was evident—and on Friday the King forbade his Levee on that account. It was his custom to visit the Princess, with the Queen, every Saturday evening from six to eight. They now went at that hour on Friday. Hearing they were come, the Princess rose, dressed herself, and attempted to walk to meet them, but was so weak and unable, that the Princess of Brunswick ran out and called in the King and Queen. She pressed them to stay till ten, and when that hour came signed to them to retire as usual. They stayed however, in her palace and she went to bed. . . . At 6:30 next morning her attendants found her dead."

The London populace did not extend to Augusta that palliation of judgment which so often mercifully follows death. "The Princess of Wales was buried," wrote a contemporary. "The populace huzzaed for joy and treated her memory with much disrespect." It was soon learned that the Princess had died without leaving a will and it was widely rumored that she had not left a penny behind. Since her income was £64,000 a year and she was known to have lived quite parsimoniously, the gossips said that it was now easy to see how Lord Bute had acquired the hundreds of thousands of pounds that he had been spending to improve his extensive properties.

The King seems to have accepted his mother's death very calmly.

To Lord North he wrote on the morning that it occurred, "What I yesterday expected has happened. My Mother is no more." Immediately he busied himself with the formal details of the funeral. Lord Hertford proposed "... the Duchess of Richmond to be the Chief Mourner; She is the first in rank; and behaved with great propriety in the last royal funeral when there was some difficulty in settling it, and he fears there may be some difficulty in obtaining the proper number upon looking at the list of Ladies of that rank." But for some reason the King selected the Duchess of Grafton for the honor.

Nowhere is there a suggestion of any mental disorder in the King immediately or remotely dependent upon Augusta's demise. This is of psychiatric importance, particularly in the light of the tenets of the more ardent Freudian disciples, who, with their sexocentric emphasis, postulate Oedipus conflicts as the basis of so many mental disorders. If such were the case with George III one could have expected a flare-up at his mother's death.

Before Augusta was buried the King wrote the Duke of Gloucester, informing him that their mother before her death "... asked me whether I did not mean to apply to Parliament for a prevention to clandestine marriages in my family, to which I replied that in a few days I should send a message for that purpose to both houses." Within a month of her death he had carried out this, her last wish. The chief cause for Augusta's great concern about the marriages of her children was the very undesirable union that her third son, the Duke of Cumberland, had made a few months before. Undoubtedly too, disquieting rumors had reached her of Gloucester's close association with an illegitimate daughter of Sir Edward Walpole. Only ten days before her death, fate dealt her a last cruel blow in the news of the imprisonment of her daughter, the Queen of Denmark, for adultery.

During 1770 Cumberland, who was then twenty-five, gained the distinction of being the first Prince of the Blood to be dragged into a Court of Justice to defend an adultery action. The Earl of Grosvenor, the complainant, was awarded damages of £10,000. The trial provided great public amusement through the introduction of love letters that were singularly vapid even for this type of literary production. Such excerpts as "kisses her dearest little hair" and "I have your heart and it lies warm in my breast. I hope mine feels as easy to you," delighted the scandal-loving populace. On November 5 the King ap-

pealed in desperation to his Prime Minister, Lord North, for money with which to settle the affair quickly. He realized, he said, that there would be "great difficulty in you finding so large a sum as thirteen thousand pounds in so short a time. . . . but the money must be got for the damages and costs, which, if not paid this day se'nnight, the Proctors will certainly force the House, which at this licentious time will occasion reflexions on the rest of the family." North assured him that the funds were obtainable. "This takes a heavy load off of me," said the King, "though I cannot enough express how much I feel at being the least concerned in an affair that my way of thinking has ever taught to behold as highly improper; but I flatter myself the truths I have thought it incumbent to utter may be of some use in his future conduct."

The Duke may have found "the truths of some use," since his next affair was with a woman whose husband felt himself honored rather than injured by his wife's intimacy with royalty. In November, 1771, the King learned that Cumberland had married Anne Luttrell Horton, the widowed daughter of a poor Irish peer, Lord Irnham, and the sister of Colonel Luttrell, who had displaced Wilkes as the member from Middlesex. Walpole described the lady admiringly: "The New Princess of the Blood is a young widow of twenty-four, extremely pretty, not handsome, very well made, with the most amorous eyes in the world, and eyelashes a yard long; coquette beyond measure, artful as Cleopatra, and completely mistress of all her passions and projects. Indeed, eyelashes three quarters of a yard shorter would have served to conquer such a head as she has turned." King George was greatly upset when he learned of the marriage. "The Duke of Cumberland," he said indignantly, "not contented with his unwarrantable conduct in the St. Alban's business, his attendance on Mr. Bailey and his connection with Fetty place and Newmarket grooms has now stooped to marry Mrs. Horton." He informed the wayward Duke that he refused ever to see him again unless Mrs. Horton was known by no other name. The Lord Chamberlain notified the members of the Peerage that those visiting at Cumberland House would not be received at St. James's. And the Duke was not summoned to the meeting of the Knights of the Garter.\*

Two months after George III learned of Cumberland's marriage he was shocked by his sister Caroline Mathilda's illicit romance. The

\*The Duke became a staunch Whig, and after his nephew, Prince George, openly broke with his father, Cumberland House became the site of many of the social gatherings of the Opposition. Much to the annoyance of both the King and

story of this younger sister of George III has become one of the tragic romances of history. At fifteen she was married to Christian VII of Denmark, a dissolute and moronic young man who neglected her cruelly. Soon afterward she fell in love with Christian's young Prime Minister, John Frederick Struensee.\* The affair, which was carried on quite boldly, might have been overlooked by Christian, but Struensee's jealous political enemies were eager to make a public scandal of it. An official spying expedition discovered part of Struensee's costume in the Queen's bedroom after a masked ball and the lovers were arrested. Struensee was cruelly put to death and the Queen incarcerated in a castle prison with her six-months-old infant. Four months later she was transported by an English warship to Germany, where she became a prisoner in the castle at Zelle. She survived only a short time. Fate, to give a truly artistic denouement to the tragedy, had her buried in a vault side by side with her great-grandmother, Sophia Dorothea, who had been imprisoned in a neighboring castle by George I for a similar misadventure.

George III took a serious interest in the lives of his brothers and sisters, nearly all of whom lived by a pattern which was totally different from his own. He had tried to advise his young sister on how to live amicably with her difficult husband. And the news of her incarceration must have been a great blow, coming just at the time of his mother's death. But he faced the situation realistically. He pored over all of the documents concerning her guilt and worked out with Denmark an acceptable way of dealing with the disgraced Queen.

In the early years there was a strong affection between King George and his brother, Edward, the Duke of York, who was only a year and a half younger. As they matured, however, their dissimilar characters made them increasingly unsympathetic. The Duke died in 1767 when he was only twenty-eight. According to Walpole, he ended "his silly, good-humoured, troublesome career in a piteous manner." After dancing all night at a ball given for him by the Duc de Villars at his

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Queen, Cumberland and his Duchess had quite a hold over their difficult son, whom they nicknamed "Taffy." The Duchess concentrated her enchanting powers, which were considerable, on the Prince, with great success. The Duke further annoyed his brother by manifesting a contemptuous hatred for the Clergy of the Established Church, by condemning the war in America, and by reprobating the use of hired German troops.

\*Christian had met him by chance in a small town near Hamburg, where he was practicing medicine, and taking a liking to him had induced him to return to Copenhagen with him. There he had a phenomenal political career and soon became Prime Minister.

country house near Marseilles, the Duke got into his post-chaise and dashed toward Genoa, where there was a lady with whom he was then in love. He died while en route, of pneumonia. The Duke's death brought him a dubious distinction: a Bishop, in eulogizing him, was able to say only that had he "outlived the years of dissipation, he would have proved an honour to his King and Country." Nevertheless, according to Sir William Musgrave, "the King was most seriously grieved for the loss of his brother and literally almost cried his eyes out."

The Duke of Gloucester was George III's favorite brother, and the King spoke of him as "the only one in the world to whom I can fully unburden myself." In 1766, when Gloucester was only twenty-three, he had married Maria, the illegitimate daughter of Sir Edward Walpole, and the Earl of Waldegrave's widow. But the marriage was not made known to the King until June, 1772. "I cannot deny," George III wrote to Lord North, "that on the subject of this Duke my heart is wounded; I have ever loved him with the fondness one bears to a child." The news, coming to George soon after his young sister's tragic difficulties, was profoundly disturbing. He refused to receive his new sister-in-law; and when, on May 29, 1773, an heir was born to the Gloucesters, he took no notice of the event.\* Eleven days later Wilkes seized on this fresh opportunity to discomfit the King by moving an address in the Common Council to congratulate his Majesty upon the latest addition to the royal family. Eventually, the King's affection for Gloucester, and the propriety with which the Duke and Duchess conducted themselves, healed the breach between the brothers. But meanwhile the marriage served as an additional irritation and embarrassment to the King.

The purpose of the Royal Marriage Bill, which George had introduced shortly after his mother's death, was to avoid any possible confusion as to succession and to prevent those of royal blood from making marriages that would bring disgrace upon the monarchy. The bill provided that the living, unmarried descendants of George III and all future English descendants of that monarch could not marry under twenty-five years of age without the consent of the King. If the King refused consent, those over twenty-five could apply to the Privy Council, naming the intended person, and if within one year neither House of Parliament should address the King against the proposed marriage it would be permitted.

\*Horace Walpole's increasing antipathy to George III must in part have resulted from the monarch's reaction to this marriage, and his refusal to receive the new Duchess.

The bill was unpopular with many of the ministers. The Opposition attacked it as an insult to the English peerage, "giving leave to Princes of the Blood to lie with our wives and forbidding them to marry our daughters." Chatham described it as "new-fangled and impudent and the extent of the powers given wanton and tyrannical." The King was more than usually stubborn about this bill; it must pass promptly and without amendment. "I expect every nerve to be strained to carry the Bill," he declared. "It is not a question relating to Administration, but personally to myself, therefore I have a right to expect a hearty support from every one in my service, and I shall remember defaulters."

George received frequent bulletins of the bill's progress. In his responses he showed his keen zest for political struggles and his real aptitude for politics. "The turn of Yesterday's Debate," he wrote "is most favourable as opposition, or at least the greatest part of it, have been forced to change its Ground and admit there ought to be some regulations made with respect to the Marriages of the Royal Family; it is a known Maxim in all Military Operations that when the Enemy change positions that is the right moment to push them with vigour, the Rule I look upon as not less good in Parliamentary operations." Another letter of the same date shows the earnestness of his threats: "Lord North's Attention in correcting the impression that I had that Col. Burgoyne and Lt. Col. Harcourt were absent yesterday is very handsome to these Gentlemen, for I certainly should have thought myself obliged to have named a new Governor [of Fort William in Scotland] in room of the former, to have removed the other from my Bedchamber."

Twenty-three-year-old Charles Fox, then at the beginning of one of the greatest political careers in the history of England, heard the menacing sounds of the cracking whip, and resigned his post on the Board of Admiralty. He could not, with good conscience, vote for such a measure. It was an action which the King never forgot. No doubt there burned in Fox's generous heart the ten-year-old memory of the pain which the Princess Dowager's proscription of George's marriage had caused his lovely aunt, Sarah Lennox, to whom he was devoted. Despite the zeal of the opposition, the measure passed with large majorities, although an amendment limiting its duration to the reign of George III was rejected by a majority of only eighteen. King George expressed his great appreciation to the head of his government, Lord North, on the successful passage of the bill.

## CHAPTER X



*"It has been a certain position with me that firmness is the characteristic of an Englishman, that consequently when a Minister will show a resolution boldly to advance that he will meet with support."*

GEORGE III IN LETTER TO LORD NORTH

LORD NORTH represented the ideal Prime Minister, in the eyes of George III. He had wanted a man of distinction and ability, not firmly allied to any faction, who could control a majority in the Commons and yet would be fully compliant to the will of his sovereign. Bute had fallen short of the ideal because he had no influence over Parliament; Grenville was a failure because he was not malleable enough. But Frederick, Lord North, met all his King's qualifications.

One reason why North suited George III so admirably was that he refused to consider himself as Prime Minister. He pointed out that the Constitution did not provide for such an office, and he preferred to regard himself merely as the First Lord of the Treasury. Furthermore, he was the King's close personal friend. From early childhood, North and the King had been playfellows—at least to the limited extent that George had been permitted to have companions. They had been members of the same cast in the children's theatricals at Leicester House. George's father had been an intimate associate of North's parents, the Earl and Countess of Guilford. In fact, the Earl of Guilford named his first-born Frederick after the Prince. As the young Guilford heir developed, he was seen to bear so close a resemblance to the Princes of the Blood that scandal-bearing tongues began to wag. Nathaniel Wraxall describes North as inclined to corpulency and as having, like many of the members of the royal family, "a fair com-



plexion, regular features, light hair, with bushy eyebrows, and grey eyes, rather prominent in his head.”\*

North had many of the temperamental qualities associated with fat men. Nothing ruffled him. He possessed a quick wit and bore no man malice. Although honest himself, he did not strain at contributing, through bribery, to the dishonesty of others. His personal morals were impeccable. When he had leisure from governmental duties, he read the classics, in which he was well versed, or romped with his children, who treated him with utter informality. At times his good humor failed him and he became much depressed. Also, he had an uncomfortable habit of falling off to sleep in public.

Lord North was not an orator—in fact, his tongue was said to be too large for his mouth—but his wit and amiability were great assets. Once during the early days of North's administration Grenville, on behalf of the Opposition, was haranguing the Commons on the subject of public finances, and North fell asleep. After a time one of his colleagues nudged him. As he stirred from his nap, he heard Grenville saying, “I shall draw attention of the House to revenues and expenditures of the country in 1689.” Whereupon North exclaimed quite audibly, “Zounds, Sir, you have woken me up a near one hundred years too soon.” His humor did not have Sheridan's subtlety nor Wilkes' audacity, but in debate and in political leadership it was very serviceable. The greater the adversity, the more likely it was to bubble forth. When he was making the final and fruitless public defense of his Ministry, a dog that had wandered into the House and got under one of the benches began to howl. North stopped his speech and finally the howling ceased. He then took up again with “as the new member has ended his argument, I beg to be allowed to continue.”

The basis of Lord North's large personal following in the Commons must have been his upright and amiable personality, as well as the bribery and patronage which he dispensed. For a century and a half American schoolboys have been erroneously taught that he was an ogre with a heart of stone and a fist of iron, instead of the myopic fat man that he really was.

He had been cajoled into accepting the leadership of the government in 1770 by the King's plea that there was no other peer in his

\*According to Walpole's picture North's appearance was far from engaging: “Two large prominent eyes that rolled about to no purpose—for he was utterly short sighted—a wide mouth, thick lips, and inflated visage, gave him the air of a blind trumpeter.”

service whom he was willing to have as Grafton's successor. When he came into office the government, through unique blundering, had, as Chatham described it, reached a position "where ordinary inability never arrives, and nothing but first rate geniuses in incapacity can reach." North was himself out of sympathy with the governmental policy toward America. He was not opposed to the political theories on which the policy was based but he felt pessimistic about the results. He realized his own inability to change the course that seemed so inexorably predetermined when he took office.

Although North had a large personal following, he was the type of man who looked for guidance to some one stronger than himself. Compliance was a keystone of his nature, a trait which had manifested itself early in his career. Seldom has a man in public life consulted and obeyed his father to the extent that he had done. And after he became Prime Minister, that same loyal obedience was transferred from his father to his King.

George III knew well how to use his loyalty. On one of the occasions when North planned to resign his office, the King granted him the wardenship of the Cinque Ports—a position opportunely made available by the death of the Earl of Holderness. George shrewdly informed his minister that it would be given him whether he consented to carry on the government or not. After such noble generosity North felt that he had no choice.

George III never changed his attitude toward the colonists in what he termed their "unnatural rebellion."\* Through the entire struggle he looms up like a giant steam roller, pushing ahead relentlessly. He never hesitated; he never altered his course. From the beginning he was firmly convinced of the moral right of his position. He was not so much a believer in the Divine Right of Kings as in the infallibility of their decisions. He was certain that democracies did not exist in the natural order of things. And, having a strong religious faith, he felt sure that God would prosper the side of the right—Britain's side; no doubts gnawed at his peace of mind; the dictates of his conscience were clear and loud. To his minister he wrote: "I wish nothing but good, therefore every one who does not agree with me is a traitor and a scoundrel." North, on the other hand, was throughout the American struggle episodically plagued and harassed by uncertainty. Ofttimes

\*He had none of the wisdom of Chesterfield, who judiciously observed, "I never saw a forward child mended by whipping; and I would not have the Mother Country become a step-mother."

—in fact, most times—his heart was not in his task. He was not an aggressive and positive person; he was amiable and fond of peace and leisure, and he put off difficulties as long as possible. As King George put it, he suffered from “a love of indecision.”\*

His repeated efforts to escape from his responsible post were sometimes ludicrous, sometimes pathetic. Many times he was browbeaten into carrying on by a series of royal phrases, ranging in tone from the admonitory challenge, “I can never suppose that he, who so very handsomely stepped forth on the desertion of the Duke of Grafton, would lose all merit by following so undignified an example,” to the peremptory edict, “No man has a right to talk of leaving me at this hour.” In 1778, when North grew panicky about the course of events in America, he pathetically begged the King to release him and give the government over to Chatham, who, although an opponent of the war, was against American independence and was feared by France. The King’s reply was that he would abdicate rather than be “made a slave” to Chatham’s faction for the rest of his life.

After North and Fox had labored over a conciliatory proposal to the colonies North wrote the King, begging to be allowed to resign. His letter contains a remarkable revelation. “Indeed,” he wrote, “the anxiety of his mind for the last two months has deprived Lord North of his memory and his understanding.” George III sent a kindly response, assuring his minister of his confidence, and that of the House of Commons and the public. He said that he was not upset over Lord North’s letter because he had known that now and then he was “inclined to despond.” He advised him that it was not worth his while to worry over conciliatory proposals, because he was convinced that they would prove useless. In November, 1779, Lord Gower, who had been a staunch supporter of the government, resigned as Lord President, asserting that the policy pursued “must end in ruin to His Majesty and the country.” In a letter to the King, North tells of his futile attempt to prevent the resignation. “In the argument,” he wrote, “Lord North had certainly one disadvantage, which is that he holds in his heart, and has held for three years past, the same opinion with Lord Gower.” And still there was no quitting.

On one occasion the King admonished North sharply for not having drawn up a plan to stimulate the flagging attendance in Parlia-

\*This characterization was contained in George III’s letter to Lord Suffolk. In this letter he also complained of other cabinet members; Rochford was too impulsive, Hillsborough was suspicious, and Gower was oversensitive.

ment: "This you promised to draw up; yet the week has elapsed without your producing it, and your aversion to decide would lead you to postpone it till too late, unless forced by me . . . indeed, my dear Lord, though the present scene is not very clear, yet with activity, decision, and zeal, things may soon wear a very different appearance." The plan was presented. A week later the King wrote Lord North, "It has been a certain position with me that firmness is the characteristic of an Englishman, that consequently when a Minister will show a resolution boldly to advance that he will meet with support."

As the war dragged on Lord North became upset and depressed by every reversal. The King, through his confidential agent, John Robinson, kept constantly goading him on. Such sentences as, "Mr. Robinson must today attempt his irksome part of rousing Lord North to act as he ought" occur in nearly every communication. In the series of letters from the King to Robinson on the subject of North's behavior, there is one that furnishes important data in understanding George III's own personality. "Intrigues," he declared, "should never approach a man of Lord North's cast, who with many good qualities too much tends to the difficulty of the moment and procrastination, and Lord North from wanting to get out of the evil of the day but too often falls into what may prove ruin in futurity. I own my mind always inclines to meet difficulties as they arise, and I would much rather have them soon fall on my head if not to be avoided than to know in future they must inevitably happen. Public men ought always to act on system not from occasion of the minute; 'tis that alone has given the advantage to Franklin, 'tis by uniformly attending to that, that we may yet retrieve our affairs."

After the American rebellion had once got surely under way, every other issue was subordinate in the mind of the monarch. Except for North, the important statesmen definitely opposed the royal policy toward America. Should political exigencies make it necessary for any of them to take over the leadership of the government, prosecution of the war could not be carried on to George III's satisfaction. No other leader had the qualities which could weld into a compliant unit such heterogeneous elements as the libertine Earl of Sandwich and the noble Earl of Dartmouth. Any real change in Ministry would mean a change in American policy and, in the King's eyes, that would bring ruin to Great Britain. He was goading Lord North in order to preserve the nation.

Yet despite the merciless pressure with which he was constantly harassing the dejected minister, he had very real affection for him. "I have understood by your hints that you have been in debt ever since you settled in life," the King wrote to North, in 1777. "I must therefore insist that you allow me to assist you with ten thousand, fifteen thousand, or even twenty thousand pounds if that will be sufficient. . . . You know me very ill if you don't think that of all the letters I ever wrote to you this one gives me the greatest pleasure; and I want no other return but you being convinced that I love you as well as a man of worth, as I esteem you as a Minister." During George III's reign of more than a half century, there was probably no government leader, unless it be Henry Addington, for whom he developed such personal affection as for his old friend, Frederick, Lord North.\*

Soon after North became Prime Minister, the King realized that he was not fitted for the petty details of politics; so he employed a remarkably skillful political agent, John Robinson, to do the dirty work. Robinson is still a figure too little known. Officially, he was an inconspicuous Treasury functionary; but in reality he played a most important role in the workings of the government. He became absolutely indispensable to the King. Their correspondence shows, more clearly than any other source, how the King conducted his political machine during the War of Independence. George III adopted an unusual tone of familiarity with Robinson, treating him much in the manner that a great man treats a trusted personal servant. Robinson, on his side, performed a great variety of duties for the King. He personally delivered important letters; he helped draft the speeches from the Throne; he was constantly employed in inspiring Lord North; he helped direct patronage and dispensed huge sums of money to carry elections. We find him getting the King to sample casks of sauerkraut provided for the forces in America. He had special dispatch boxes made for the King, "finding that the Treasury has occasion to trouble His Majesty often on the American Business and East India affairs." It was his task to persuade an adjutant general not to resign. He had to see a resident of Windsor who was renting from the King, to get the lease back so the King could enlarge his garden. He had to spy on cabinet officers to learn their real attitudes toward one another. During the war he kept the King supplied with American and Irish newspapers.

\*Years after Lord North's death, George III chanced to meet one of his daughters. "I shall always love your family on account of your father," he told her.

John Robinson was a remarkably astute political tactician; he knew the political ambitions of every member of the House of Commons and the exact sum of money needed to secure the different seats for friendly candidates. Largely on the basis of his political predictions, the King successfully maneuvered the dissolution of the Ministry in 1784 and took the great risk of convoking a new Parliament. Robinson had accurately informed the King that in order to obtain a new Parliament with "253 pro, 116 hopeful, 66 doubtful, and 123 against" it would require patronage and the expenditure of £193,000.

By the time the North Ministry was established, George III was using bribes freely to attain his political ends. Despite the fact that he had an annual income, exempt from parliamentary control, of more than £1,000,000, after wearing the crown only nine years he had to appeal to Parliament for a half million additional to pay his debts.\* When these funds were solicited from Parliament, the opposition leaders said that the money had been used "to debauch the virtue of their own elected representatives." Such accusations worried a man of George III's rigid moral cast. As late as 1771, he expressed feelings of guilt about his venal political practices. In a letter to North, he opposed a secret subsidy to the Court of Sweden: "As there is no publick mode of obtaining the money that is expended in that corruption," he wrote, "it must be taken from my Civil List; consequently new debts incurred and when I apply to Parliament for relieving Me, an odium cast on myself and ministry as if the money had been expended in bribing Parliament." He grew less squeamish as time went on but he always had reservations in regard to expending secret funds for political purposes. With the development of the rebellion in America and the increasing violence of the parliamentary opposition, George III became convinced that he was battling against the allies of the devil and that the righteousness of the cause conferred absolution, no matter what means had to be employed to attain his noble ends. In 1777 the King had again to apply to Parliament for funds,† this time for £600,000. No royal couple could have lived with greater personal frugality than King George and Queen Charlotte. Yet among their

\*This was when the entire peace-time budget of Great Britain was only £5,000,000 and when, according to Lord Shelburne, a man of high rank could live well on £5000.

†Lord North wrote to the King that had he known "the expense attending elections and re-elections in the years 1779, 1780, and 1781 would have amounted to £72,000 he certainly would not have advised his Majesty to have embarked on any such expense."

private papers are numerous notations of the sums which they owed tradesmen and were unable to pay promptly.

North was himself rather concerned over the lavish dispensing of election funds. "Perhaps," he wrote apologetically, soon after retiring, "it may be answered that the sums paid to gentlemen who have the command of Boroughs for their interest, are to be considered as Bribes. But these bargains are not usually called by that name and the money disbursed in that manner does not exceed what has been disbursed on all former occasions." According to Trevelyan, in addition to actual bribes, large sums of money were devoted to subsidizing political writers, to persecuting Opposition pamphleteers, and to corrupting the London press, which was an easy but costly enterprise. This was an era when the publication or suppression of personal scandal was a readily purchasable commodity and even favorable notices of plays had their price.\* Gibbon, the historian, who had voted with the government regularly, suddenly bolted in 1778. He had summoned up enough moral courage to vote for Fox's motion against sending any more regular troops to America. Further, he announced that Lord North did not "want pardon for the past, applause for the present, or confidence for the future." His vote as well as his pen was promptly obtained by a sinecure on the Board of Trade at £800 a year. He admitted himself that his duties were "not intolerably severe." Fox commemorated the incident in verse:

King George, in a fright  
Lest Gibbon should write  
The story of Britain's disgrace,  
  
Thought no way so sure  
His pen to secure  
As to give the historian a place.

Most of the funds for actual bribery went through the hands of John Robinson. Communications of this type were frequently sent him by the King: "I have in the box that contained the Irish Newspapers enclosed to Mr. Robinson £14,000 which is the £2000 a month due since the payment I made to Lord North last year. I thought this the most secret way of doing it. . . ."

As a matter of fact, George III was not the type of man who could

\*Harris, the director of the Covent Garden Theatre, paid the manager of the *Times* £100 annually for such service.

maintain secrecy; eventually he was sure to blurt things out. As Veitch pointed out: "A pretence of ignorance was, indeed, idle when seats were openly advertised for sale with newspapers; when £5000 had been left by will for the purchase of a seat in Parliament; when a seat had been reckoned amongst the saleable assets of a bankrupt, and when a defaulting debtor had paid the market-price for a seat in order that, under the protection of Parliamentary privilege, he might evade his creditors by escaping from England without arrest." In the 1730's, £2000 seems to have been regarded as the normal price of a seat. In 1766 the Corporation of Oxford, which was in debt, offered to secure the return of the sitting members in exchange for a loan of £4000 free from interest. In 1784 the electors of Wallingford were able to sell the election to the members for £6000.

With the King's direct cooperation, Robinson worked hard to get the satisfactory majority which was obtained in the General Election of 1780. The lengths to which George III went in such endeavors is forcibly presented by the contest in Windsor, the King's own borough. The government was eager to have a certain Mr. Powny elected. The King wrote, in May, 1780, "Lord North acquainted me with his wish of supporting Mr. Powny for the borough of New Windsor. I shall get my tradesmen encouraged to appear for him. I shall order, in consequence of Mr. Robinson's hint, the houses I rent in Windsor to stand in the parish rate in different names of my servants; so that will create 6 votes." A little later Lord North wrote Robinson, "Mr. Powny stipulated at first only £1000. He has, I believe, had £1500 or £2000. What does he want now?" George III wrote North, "If the Duke of Northumberland requires some gold pills for the election it would be wrong not to give him assistance." The King obtained a large majority in the election. In four years, when he realized that in a new election the "gold pills" had to be administered all over again, he felt that he had been cheated.

In an earlier election in which the prominent Whig, Admiral Keppel, had stood for Windsor, George III did not hesitate to resort to personal solicitation to defeat him. His Majesty poked his head into a Windsor draper's shop and called out, "The Queen wants a gown, wants a gown. No Keppel. No Keppel." Lest the King and Lord North be considered peculiarly corrupt, one must view these phenomena in historical perspective. George III initiated no new and striking departures in political corruption. As was his tendency in everything that he



touched, he dominated the political situation. He entered into it with unbridled intensity and prosecuted it with a degree of thoroughness which was unique. In consequence, he undoubtedly was himself a more active participant and spent greater sums of money on elections than his predecessors.\*

While George II had been content to let Newcastle and Walpole manage the political machine, George III was the type of man who would not readily resign any important governmental functions to subordinates. His domination of the whole structure of the government reached its greatest intensity during Lord North's ministry. Later, under the younger Pitt, it waned considerably because, even though he was young, Pitt was a man of great pride and remarkable efficiency; he would not submit to constant petty dictation. After George III's recovery from a serious attack of insanity in 1788, there was a further sharp constriction in his field of operation.

In discussing George III, Lecky speaks of "the microscopic attention which he paid to every detail of public business." In this respect he was a remarkable man. He knew the name of every officer in the Navy and the ship to which he was assigned. He knew the staff of each of his Army regiments, the parishes in which each bishop had served in his advancement in the hierarchy, the personnel of the University faculties and the complete genealogy of all of the prominent families. Topography was a favorite subject with him. He knew the soundings of the chief harbors in Europe and the strong and weak points in most of its fortified towns. A survey of his correspondence leaves one marvelling at the diversity of his interests and his knowledge. A capable discussion of the balance of power in Europe is interpolated between a letter promoting a captain to a majority and another urging the appointment of Doctor Goodall to succeed Mr. Heath as the Second Master at Eton. His correspondence shows that he felt every phase in the life of England's eight million inhabitants as his own concern. In one letter he urged Lord Salisbury to use his influence to get Lord Bellamont to return to his wife. In another he instructed Lord Dartmouth to tell the Earl of Aylesford not to come to town, "till the Countess of Aylesford is safely delivered of a twentieth child, though the King rather hopes two will be produced—not

\*Popular contests for seats in Parliament were rare. According to Professor Laprade, in the seven general elections between 1760 and 1800 there were only fifty-seven actual contests.

infrequent in that branch of the Finch family." He wrote to Baron Munchausen, his minister at Hanover, to find out the income and the cost of living of the average Hanoverian peasant family of five.

George III's conscientiousness was so extreme that it indicates neurotic behavior. Sir Walter Scott wrote in 1827, "Lord Bathurst told me that the late King made it at one time a point of conscience to read every word of every act of Parliament before giving his assent to it. There was a mixture of principles and nonsense in this." Had his conscientiousness not been supplemented by his incredible energy he could not have done as much as he did. His energy level varied considerably even during periods of apparent normality. Ofttimes it was amazingly great. For months during 1780 he rode horseback daily from 4 to 7 A.M. He was also in the habit of rapidly walking twelve miles on his way from Windsor to London before getting into his carriage. When he was in his fifties he would at times ride thirty to forty miles on horseback in a morning. On occasion horses of the royal party died from exhaustion in their efforts to keep up with the pace set by the King.

One has to look at a modern dictator with his multiple cabinet posts, to appreciate the extent of George III's activities during the Revolutionary War period. There were many factors which contributed to this—North's self-effacement, the lukewarm attitude of many members of the government toward the prosecution of the war, the King's total distrust of those who differed with him, even to a minor degree, and the natural tendency of rulers to dictate in great national emergencies. Then, too, the King had zealously dedicated himself to lead a cause which he looked upon as a holy crusade. George III saw the rebellious colonists as wicked children who had to be forced into obedience by their King—their royal father. He persistently declared that the war was being fought on behalf of Parliament—that the colonists had flaunted its authority. This was largely in the nature of a rationalization. Originally the war had this as one of its bases, but as it progressed it became "the King's War." Long after the people and Parliament sickened of it—and they would have done so even sooner had not France, their old enemy, become allied with America—George III obstinately insisted on its prosecution.

Obstinacy and conservatism were the characteristics which formed the keynote of George III's personality. His was a strength that is the bastard child of weakness—a feeling of sureness that an individual

develops to mask his own basic insecurity from the world and himself. It is a type of compensatory psychological adjustment that great numbers of people acquire. A King who is weak and vacillating and self-conscious is not a ruler. George was, all his life, playing a part. His acting began in the nursery, and his mother, Princess Augusta, was his first coach. For years her overtowering figure had suddenly loomed up before him and her prompting voice had intoned, "George, be a King." As a melancholy adolescent he was keenly aware of his neurotic weakness of character. We have already quoted these significant phrases, which he sent at eighteen to his mentor, Lord Bute: "I do now and here tell you that I am resolved in myself to take the resolute part, to act the man in everything, to repeat whatever I am to say with spirit and not blushing and afraid as I have hitherto; I will also never show the least irresolution. . . . I know, if I in the least deviate from what I here promise and declare, I shall lose the greatest of stakes, my Crown."

There are many evidences that, all through George III's life, his firmness had a studied quality; he was almost consciously forcing himself to be the type of man that he felt he must be. To North, he wrote, "It has been a certain position with me that firmness is the characteristic of an Englishman." In a letter to Pitt six years later occur two significant phrases—"Indecision is the most painful of all situations to a firm mind," and "Half measures are ever puerile." Subsequently, he outlined for Pitt his mental processes in reaching a decision: "I never assent till I am convinced what is proposed is right and then I keep them—I never allow that to be destroyed by after thoughts which on all subjects tend to weaken never to strengthen the original proposal." Only the man with a marked weakness for vacillation so completely closes his mind to "after thoughts." In nearly everything George III was reactionary. To the Duke of Buckingham he once asserted that his allegiance was "to the Constitution as fixed at the Revolution," in 1688. He would not tolerate what he called "seekers of improvement." "I will have," he wrote, "no innovations in my time."

To George III the view of Adam Smith that the colonies were morally obligated to contribute to England's budget, but that Great Britain would be better off letting them secede if they refused to do so, seemed quite mad.\* The monarch foresaw in this attitude the

\*The fact that England's trade with America, one year after the conclusion of the war, was larger than before the war was evidence of Smith's greatness as an economist.

complete ruination of commerce and the dismemberment of the empire. Ireland, which had been chronically erupting, he was certain would immediately break its bonds. England's prestige in Europe would be destroyed.

When, in the summer of 1774, news came to England that a Congress of rebellious colonists had been called in America, the King perceived the seriousness of the situation. He had instructed North to dissolve Parliament and hold a general election. Since the government had an even larger majority in the newly elected Parliament, he concluded that sentiment against America was crystallizing in England. In consequence, his own stubborn attitude became more set. "The die is now cast," he wrote North on September 11, 1774, "the colonies must either submit or triumph. . . . I am clear there must be always one tax to keep up the right."

As soon as the war began it was apparent that the King, although he was without sound military training or experience, was to act as Chief of Staff. On October 16, 1775, he wrote Lord North, "I have maturely weighed the advantage of a winter expedition against the four southern colonies of North America, and the great difficulties of assembling 2000 men for that service; but the former is so very material that I am ready to give direction for the 15th and 37th Regiments of Infantry being ordered to embark in the second week in December; they are not part of the 12,000 to remain in Ireland, and would probably have embarked in February for America; weak as we are in regiments of infantry in Britain, two regiments shall at that time be sent to Ireland to replace the 53rd and 54th Regiments, which shall also go on this expedition, being next regiments for foreign service. . . . I am clear the next attempt should be made on North Carolina, as the Highland settlers are said to be well inclined. . . ."

To Viscount Barrington, his Secretary at War, he wrote soon after hostilities started, "By the return the Lord Lieutenant has sent of the 68th Regiment of foot on their Landing in Ireland I have the pleasure of seeing that it wanted only fourteen: but in this return, Lieut. Richard Taylor, Ensign Molly Brabazon, Ensign James Bigsby and Surgeon Caleb Barber are returned absent without leave. You will therefore write to Lieut. General Lambton to direct them immediately to join the Regiment in Ireland. . . ."

The energetic prosecution of his multitudinous duties was astonishing. No details were too small for notice. He tasted the biscuits and

the sauerkraut sent the troops; he investigated the seaworthiness of the ships; and he took a hand in the recruiting. From the first, he favored an energetic and ruthless war. In July, 1775, he advised Dartmouth, "The rebels have got Indians to their assistance, we must make use of the same desperate weapons." To John Robinson he admitted a year later that he was pleased with Sir Guy Carleton: "By having admitted so many Indians to partake of his Provisions, I flatter myself he means not to keep them unemployed." In March, 1777, he wrote Robinson that he demanded a decisive victory and could accept no compromise: "I am sorry to find anyone adopts the idea of there being any reason in Sir W. Howe's application for 20,000 additional troops; I know the thing is impracticable, and if he and his brother will act with a little less lenity (which I really think cruelty as it keeps up the contest) the next campaign will bring the Americans in a temper to accept of such terms as may enable the mother Country to keep them in order; for we must never come into such as may patch for a year or two, and then bring on new broils; the regaining of their affection is an idle idea: it must be the convincing them that it is to their interest to submit, and then they will dread further broils."

During the course of the war George III became wholly intemperate in his hatred toward the opposition leaders, particularly Chatham and Fox. His antipathy toward Franklin was also extreme.\* It had an opportunity to manifest itself in a ridiculous way. Before the Revolution, the British Board of Ordnance requested the Royal Society to determine the best way of protecting the arsenals at Purfleet from lightning. A committee was appointed by the President, Sir John Pringle, on which Benjamin Franklin and Cavendish served. Franklin drew up the report which favored pointed conductors. Benjamin Wilson, an English scientist, alone dissented in favor of blunt conductors. After the war began this became a political issue. George III ordered that the lightning rods protecting the powder magazines at Purfleet and those on his own palace be changed from the pointed to the blunt variety. The King went so far as to ask President Pringle if he could not get the Royal Society to reverse itself in favor of "English Lightning rods." The famous physician is reputed to have said, "Sire, I cannot reverse the laws and operations of nature." This re-

\*In spite of this antipathy, George III was fair-minded enough to send him a set of Captain James Cook's works, because Franklin had ordered the American ships not to molest the explorer's party on its return from the Pacific.

sulted in Sir John's resignation of the Presidency of the Society and his dismissal as a Court physician. Franklin was generally referred to as "that insidious man," after the Revolution began.

Throughout the long American struggle George III maintained his faith in its outcome. Burgoyne's surrender was a blow that stunned England. According to Walpole, at the levee the next day, "to disguise his concern he [the King] affected to laugh and be so indecently merry, that Lord North endeavoured to stop him." This observation suggests that the blow momentarily unstabilized King George. Later in his letter to North he calmly suggested that the "present misfortune" might indicate the need for a change in plans. When Sir W. Meredith and Mr. Eden broached to him the possibility of working out a peace plan with Franklin in June, 1779, the King wrote North a thoughtful and lucid letter of disapproval: ". . . No inclination to get out of the present difficulties which certainly keep my mind very far from a state of ease, can incline me to enter into what I look upon as the destruction of the Empire. I have heard Lord North frequently drop that the advantage to be gained by this contest could never repay the expense, I owne that let any War be ever so successful if persons will set down and weigh the Expenses they will find as in the last that it has impoverished the State, enriched individuals, and perhaps raised the Name only of the Conquerors, but this is only weighing such events in the Scale of a Tradesman behind his Counter; it is necessary for those in the Station it has pleased Divine Providence to place me to weigh whether expences though very great are not sometimes necessary to prevent what might be more ruinous to a Country than the loss of money. The present Contest with America I cannot help seeing as the most serious in which any Country was ever engaged: it contains such a train of consequences that they must be examined to feel its real weight; whether the laying a tax was deserving all the evils that have arisen from it. I should suppose no man could alledge that without being thought more fit for Bedlam than a Seat in the Senate; but step by step the demands of America have risen; independence is their object, that certainly is one which every man not willing to sacrifice every object to a momentary and inglorious Peace must concurr with me in thinking that this Country can never submit to: should America succeed in that, the West Indies must follow them, not independence, but must for its own interest be dependent on North America; Ireland would soon follow the same plan and be

a separate State, then this Island would be reduced to itself, and soon would be a poor Island indeed, for reduced in Her Trade Merchants would retire with their Wealth to Climates more to their Advantage, and Shoals of Manufacturers would leave this Country for the new Empire."

George III was certainly a die-hard as far as the "Contest with America" was concerned. In the next decade he showed the same dogged desire to continue the war against the French, despite its unsatisfactory progress. On November 25, 1781, Lord Germaine went to Downing Street and informed Lord North that Cornwallis had surrendered at Yorktown. North received the news "as he would have taken a bullet through his breast," and under "emotions of the greatest consternation and distress" paced up and down the room, moaning, "Oh God, it is all over, it is all over." But George III never flinched. The same courage which he exhibited at the numerous attempts at his assassination and which he had maintained throughout the war, served him in good stead now. "I have no doubt when Men are a little recovered of the shock felt by the bad news," he wrote soon after Cornwallis' surrender, "they will find the necessity of carrying on the War, though the mode of it may require alterations." After the news of Yorktown, Lord George Germain was the only government leader besides the King who wanted to push on. Early in 1782, in a letter to North, George III intimated that he would abdicate should the war end disastrously. On February 22, Conway brought in a motion "... that the war on the Continent of North America might no longer be pursued for the impracticable purpose of reducing the inhabitants of that country to obedience." The government defeated the motion by a single vote. Five days later a similar motion was passed by nineteen votes. North now hoped that he could at last resign. The King's response, "I am mortified Lord North thinks he cannot now remain in office," gave little satisfaction. North continued his entreaties. And, finally, the poor man was allowed to retire. At their parting King George said, "Remember, my Lord, it is you who desert me, not I you."

At the formation of the second Rockingham Ministry, there was a clean sweep, leaving only Lord Chancellor Thurlow from the old Cabinet. On March 27 the King wrote a number of dejected letters to his former ministers. In one he said, "The agitation of my mind you may discover by the badness of my writing." Struggling hard to main-

tain his courage, he wrote, in another, "I cannot complain, I adore the will of Providence, and will ever resign obediently to His Will. My heart is too full to add more." He felt himself bound and chained by a hostile House of Commons. To Lord Dartmouth, one of the retiring ministers of whom he was most fond, he shamefacedly confessed that he did not have the power to give him a Garter. Hurt, he added, "A politician would have been less explicit, but as I pretend to nothing, but honesty, I thought it best to express what I know I cannot do."

At some time during this painful month George III made the draft of a message to Parliament which he never presented, announcing his abdication in favor of his son. He said that he was forced to this extremity by the change in sentiment in the House of Commons, which had made it impossible for him to prosecute the war or achieve an honorable peace. Undoubtedly, at this time the King suffered a very mild and very short depression. But he soon took heart and, instead of continuing to indulge in grief and despair, struck out at others. He appears to have done so too vigorously with Lord North, even accusing him of not having his accounts in order. Later he apologized: "Lord North can not be surprised that a mind truly tore to pieces should make me less attentive to my expressions."

On July 1 Rockingham, Lord North's successor, died suddenly. His second Ministry had been functioning only four months. The royal energy was now chiefly exerted toward keeping Fox out of power, as the King feared that under his radical leadership the constitution would be violated. Shelburne took over the Ministry. Although during the spring of 1782 George III still resolutely opposed granting independence to America, he yielded in the autumn through necessity. In a letter of November 19 he wrote Thomas Townshend that he could send the articles of peace to Paris without waiting for him to see the dispatches: "He cannot be surprised at my not being overanxious for the perusal of them, as Parliament having to my astonishment come into the ideas of granting a separation to North America has disabled me from longer defending the rights of this Kingdom. But I certainly disclaim thinking myself answerable for any evils that may arise from the adoption of this measure, as necessity not conviction has made me subscribe to it." A year later, we find him escaping the final ceremonies connected with the loss of the colonies: "I have signed the warrant for the attendance of the heralds for the proclamation of



peace; I have no objection to that ceremony being performed on Tuesday; indeed I am glad it is on a day I am not in Town, as I think this completes the downfall of the lustre of this Empire; but when religion and public spirit are quite absorbed by vice and dissipation, what now has occurred is but the natural consequence; one comfort I have, that I have alone tried to support the dignity of my crown, and I feel I am innocent of the evils that have occurred, though deeply wounded that it should have happened during my reign." It was not his habit to dodge painful tasks if attention to them could accomplish anything; but what benefit could come from his reading final dispatches and appearing in London on the day that peace was declared?

In the speech from the Throne on December 5, 1782, the King announced that American Independence would be recognized. Despite the emotion which he must have felt, he read the speech in a firm voice. When the ordeal was concluded he turned to the Earl of Oxford and questioned him about his pronouncement in regard to America. "Did I lower my voice when I came to that part of my speech?" he asked. When told that he had done so, he smiled faintly. The conviction that he had done his duty preserved George III's sanity at this time. He could tolerate bitter disappointment, especially if he could project on to others the blame for the misfortune. What he could not face with equanimity was his own doubt as to whether he had done his duty or acted wisely.

At this same period the King informed his Secretary of State that he did not wish to receive an ambassador from America: "As to the question whether I wish to receive a Minister accredited from America, I certainly can never say that it will be agreeable to Me, and I shall think it wisest for both parties if only Agents were appointed; but so far I cannot help adding that I shall have a very bad opinion of any Englishman that can accept being sent as a Minister for a Revolted State, and which certainly for many Years can not have any stable Government."

Although an extremely rigid and obstinate person, George III was capable of changing his decisions. After two years had passed and it had become clear that England's commerce with America had not suffered, and the dire predictions of the total dissolution of the empire had failed to materialize, Pitt persuaded his sovereign to receive the American Minister officially. Happily John Adams left a verbatim

account of the colloquy which occurred at St. James's Palace, on June 1, 1785. This was so memorable an occasion in Anglo-American history that it merits quotation in full. Moreover, it gives evidence of the grace with which George III was capable of adjusting to a difficult situation, when duty demanded.

*John Adams.* "Sir, the United States of America have appointed me their Minister Plenipotentiary to Your Majesty, and have directed me to deliver to Your Majesty this letter which contains evidence of it. It is in obedience to their express commands that I have the honour to assure Your Majesty of their unanimous disposition and desire to cultivate the most liberal and friendly intercourse between Your Majesty's subjects and their citizens, and of their best wishes for Your Majesty's health and happiness, and for Your Royal Family. The appointment of a Minister from the United States to Your Majesty's Court will form an epoch in the history of England and America. I think myself more fortunate than all my fellow citizens in having the distinguished honour to be the first to stand in Your Majesty's royal presence in a diplomatic character; and I shall esteem myself the happiest man if I can be instrumental in recommending my country more and more to Your Majesty's royal benevolence, and of restoring an entire esteem, confidence, and affection, or, in better words, the old good nature and the old good humour between people who, though separated by an Ocean and under different Governments, have the same language, a similar religion and kindred blood. . . ."

*The King.* "Sir, the Circumstances of this audience are so extraordinary, the language, you have now held is so extremely proper, and the feelings you have discovered so justly adapted to the occasion, that I must say that I not only receive with pleasure the assurance of the friendly disposition of the United States, but I am very glad that the choice has fallen upon you to be their Minister. I wish you, Sir, to believe, that it may be understood in America, that I have done nothing in the late contest but what I thought myself indispensably bound to do, by the duty which I owed my people. I will be very frank with you. I was the last to consent to the separation; but the separation having been made, and having become inevitable, I have always said, as I say now, that I would be the first to meet the friendship of the United States as an independent Power. The moment I see such sentiments and language as yours prevail, and a disposition to give this country the preference, that moment shall I say, let the circum-

stances of language, religion, and blood have their natural and full effect."

Although George had forced himself to adjust to the loss of his colonies, he never became reconciled to it. The extent that it troubled him was evident many times during his attack of insanity in 1788. Despite the five years that had passed, the Treaty of Versailles was still gnawing at his vitals. During a psychosis, major conflicts and repressed memories come to the surface in speech and behavior. The illness tears from the patient his social mask, and during frequent periods dissimulation is no longer possible. According to Mrs. Papendiek, Colonel Greville, and other reliable informants, the loss of the colonies formed a frequent topic of the King's fragmentary utterances during the illness. Mrs. Papendiek records that on one occasion, as he was convalescing, the King asked whether Lord North had inquired for him. On being informed that he had recently inquired, he went on, "He might have recollected me sooner. However, he, poor fellow has lost his sight\* and I my mind. Yet we meant well to the Americans;—just to punish them with a few bloody noses, and then make bows for the mutual happiness of the two countries. But want of principle got into the Army, want of skill and energy in the First Lord of the Admiralty and want of unanimity at home. We lost America. Tell him not to call again, I shall never see him."

\*Lord North's blindness resulted from cataracts.

## CHAPTER XI



*"I very well know that any man who chooses to sacrifice his own life may, whenever he pleases, take away mine."*

GEORGE III

ALTHOUGH THE NORTH GOVERNMENT survived the American War, both the King and Lord North had been constantly assailed in and out of Parliament. Only the leaders of the Established Church, who were militant almost to a man, had shown any real enthusiasm for the struggle. In many quarters it became known as the "King's War." Certainly it did not win for the monarch the enthusiastic support that wars against alien foes usually generate. Despite the false reports of victories and of atrocities committed by the colonists' Indian allies, which appeared in the government press, both the war and the King had grown increasingly unpopular.

The winter of 1779-80 was a perilous period for the King and the North administration. The alliance of France and Spain with America, the humiliating spectacle of a foreign fleet commanding the English Channel, and the increase of the national debt during the war from sixty-three to one hundred and ninety-eight millions of pounds, caused the country gentry to waver in their willingness to continue the American War. In nearly every county great mass meetings were held, and petitions were drawn up in twenty-four of them. Unlike the petitions on behalf of Wilkes, these were backed by the most responsible individuals in the community. The petition from Yorkshire, introduced by Sir George Savile on February 8, had the signatures of more than eight thousand freeholders.

In February, 1780, Edmund Burke introduced, in a brilliant speech, his plan for "economical Reformation" which was calculated to reduce the budget by £200,000 a year and to do away with thirty-nine offices held by members of the House of Commons and eleven held by mem-

bers of the House of Lords. After passing its first two readings, the bill was stifled in committee. In March, Burke succeeded in having passed a bill putting an end to the Board of Trade and Plantations, agencies which had become completely useless since the onset of the American rebellion, except to furnish sinecures for loyal literary men.

In April, John Dunning, speaking in a husky voice, with a heavy Devonshire accent, suddenly moved in the House of Commons "... that the influence of the Crown was increased, is increasing and ought to be diminished."\* Astonishingly enough, over the vigorous protests of the government, the motion passed by eighteen votes. A second motion "... that it is competent to the House, whenever they think proper, to examine into and correct abuses in the expenditure of the Civil List revenues," and a third motion dealing with provincial abuses, were also passed. Fortunately for the government, the Speaker, Sir Francis Norton, became ill. "I have not the smallest doubt," wrote the King, angered by the turn of affairs, "that the Speaker has pleaded illness, to enable the Opposition to pursue the amusement [horse racing] at New Market the next Week, the Adjourning for so long a time can alone be intended to delay the business."

The adjournment from April 14 to 24 proved long enough for the governmental party whips to line up their forces and prevent further disaffection. When Parliament reconvened after the short recess the King wrote inspiring sentiments to Lord North: "It is culpable for Man at an hour like this to stand Neuter but that every one is called upon by their Inclination as well as Duty to resist what no one can deny is a plan for changing the Constitution." This is the favorite role in which George fancied himself, a knight defending the Constitution against the hydra-headed monster, Change. He once asked Pitt to "...

\*The policies of George III had been bitterly assailed on this score for some years. During the reign of the first two Georges, the power of Parliament and the Cabinet had steadily increased, with a complementary decrease in the power of the Crown. Soon after the accession of George III it was evident that he had squarely set himself to stem the tide of popular rule. During his reign he had resorted to patronage or threat of its withdrawal, to bribery, and to hints of abdication to achieve his ends. Subtlety was not a part of his make-up; so that his aims were obvious to all, even the man on the street. Edmund Burke published his remarkable pamphlet, "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents," in 1770. In it, he strongly indicted the political philosophy under which the Ministries of the 1760's functioned, particularly the increasing power of the Crown. His key-note was: "The power of the Crown, almost dead and rotten as Prerogative, has grown up anew, with much more strength, and far less odium, under the name of Influence."

call for the assistance of such men as are truly attached to our happy Constitution, and not seekers of improvement which to all dispassionate men must appear to tend to the destruction of that noble fabric which is the pride of thinking minds and the envy of all foreign nations."

The government had ridden out the Dunning hurricane, but it was badly battered. George III then had one of those great strokes of good fortune which must on several occasions have seemed to him as evidence that God was on his side. In this instance, the angel of mercy appeared in the mephitic guise of Lord George Gordon, the mad leader of the great anti-Catholic riots.

The latter half of the eighteenth century in England was a period of mob violence. With the progressive, although at times almost imperceptible, growth in the power of the people, there were episodic outbursts of license. The man of the London streets was an untutored, rough fellow who enjoyed brutal pastimes and fought vigorously. There was a great deal of hard drinking. Gin shops advertised that their customers would be made drunk for a penny and "dead drunk for twopence." Straw was provided for this more affluent group to lie out on. Bull-baiting and bear-baiting were important sports. Those who brought dogs to toss into the ring at Hockley-in-the-Hole were admitted free. And no certificate of the animal's ownership was required. People even paid to watch degenerate and drunken imbeciles compete in the rapidity with which they could devour a live cat. It was not infrequent for persons who were exposed in a pillory to be stoned to death by a mob. The keepers of Bedlam, the great hospital for the insane, made a regular practice of exhibiting the inmates, most of whom were in chains, for a small honorarium. Jailers carried on a similar traffic.\*

Public hangings were gala events, and the supply of condemned prisoners was copious, since there were more than one hundred and sixty crimes punishable by death, and as many as seventeen executions took place at a time. Until 1783 practically all hangings occurred on Tyburn Hill. Execution days came about every six weeks. Most of the small shops closed and nearly all London trooped out to the West End. The whole thing had the aspect of a fair. Broad-sides with the pur-

\*One Sunday, three thousand people pushed their way into Newgate Prison to see a famous highwayman, McClean, who was the son of an Irish Dean. The heat from the crowd became so oppressive that the bold man fainted. Crowds of perverts attended the public flogging of women at Brideswell.

ported confessions and life histories of the more important criminals were hawked about. Refreshments, both liquid and solid, were for sale.

The prisoners were generally driven in an open cart from Newgate to Tyburn. One stop was made at St. Sepulchre's Church, where the condemned were given nosegays by the clergyman, and another at the "Bowl" for a final drink. The crowds were so great that the journey of two and a half miles from the prison to the gallows often took several hours. The executions themselves were horribly brutal. Women convicted of the murder of a husband were burned; men guilty of high treason were cut down when still semi-conscious and were disembowelled. Sympathetic friends were permitted to assist in securing a speedy death by pulling on the legs of the victim, for the drop did not come into general use until 1783, although it had been used as early as 1760 in the execution of the Earl of Ferrers.\* Pieces of the hangman's noose were often sold as therapeutic agents, particularly for cases of epilepsy. Little children clustered about the gallows in hopes of securing some sweat from the freshly hanged body to cure them of the King's Evil.†

Henry Fielding, the novelist and the Bow Street magistrate, was speaking in his latter capacity when he said, "We sacrifice the lives of men, not for the reformation but the diversion of the populace." The public hangings were eventually given up, it was said, not because of squeamishness but because the police were incapable of coping with the pocket-picking which itself was a capital offense.‡

It took remarkably little to start a riot in London. In 1751, when the bill to adopt the Gregorian Calendar was passed, there were real

\*The noble Earl came to London for his execution wearing a jockey's suit and riding spurs. Then this unbalanced paranoid alcoholic elected to be dressed in his handsome white and silver wedding-suit on the final journey to the scaffold, probably as a sadistic gesture to his divorced wife, whom he considered responsible for all of his difficulties. Because of his noble rank, he was allowed to be hanged with a silken cord.

†Queen Anne was the last British monarch to employ the royal touch in treating this malady. The break with royal tradition may have resulted solely from the fact that the Georges were less superstitious than their predecessors; but since it was the custom to present each patient after treatment with a gold coin, other factors may have influenced the Hanoverians against the continuation of the "divine touch."

‡Samuel Johnson, characterized as the most abnormally English Englishman who ever lived, objected to giving up public hangings. . . . "The age is running mad after innovation," he declared. "All the business of the world is to be done in a new way; Tyburn itself is not safe from the fury of innovation."

uprisings with tumultuous cries of "Give us back our eleven days." On one occasion Drury Lane Theatre was sacked because Garrick employed French dancers. The same theatre was gutted by a mob when the management attempted to discontinue the practice of admitting patrons at half price after the second act.

Even though popular uprisings were frequent in the latter half of the eighteenth century, religious brawls and riots were rare until 1779. Catholics were generally allowed to perform their religious duties unmolested despite the stringent laws forbidding them.\* In 1778 Sir George Savile introduced a Catholic Relief Bill, which passed both houses of Parliament without a division. This bill made it legal for a Catholic priest to conduct the rites of his church and for Catholics to buy and inherit land. In order to achieve these benefits, the Pretender had to be abjured and the temporal power of the Pope forsworn. The new law applied only to England, but the Scotch protested violently lest such legislation should in the future be forced on them. Early in 1779 serious anti-Catholic riots broke out in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The flame of fanaticism spread. In London there was formed a "Protestant Association" under the ægis of a Scot, Lord George Gordon, an undistinguished man of thirty who was a member of the House of Commons. On the afternoon of June 2, 1780, 60,000 men, wearing blue cockades in their hats, marched on Parliament with a petition, said to contain more than 100,000 names, to repeal the Catholic Relief Bill. On their way to Parliament the members of both houses suffered the greatest indignities. Lord Mansfield, then seventy-five years of age, was seized by the mob and his carriage smashed because he had recently acquitted a Catholic priest. The Archbishop of York succeeded in rescuing him. The wheels were wrenched off the carriage of the Bishop of Lincoln. He fled into a house and eluded the

\*Although Catholics were not permitted actively to participate in the English government, they were rarely molested in the practice of their religion, even though there was an old Act giving a reward of £100 to any informer who procured the conviction of a Catholic priest for performing his duties in England. In 1767, a priest, John Baptist Malony, was tried at Croydon and convicted of administering the sacrament to a sick person. He actually served four years in prison and was then banished from England. It is said that there was a strong movement within the Privy Council to urge a royal pardon, but the King, who was always unsympathetic with Catholic Toleration, refused to consider it. Catholics were still subject to double land tax and were at the mercy of their Protestant relatives, who could easily deprive them of a land inheritance.



mob by reappearing in a disguise. The peers of England, with their wigs torn off and their clothing bespattered with mud, sought safety in the Halls of Westminster. They were unable to carry on the business of Parliament because their quavering voices could not be heard above the yells of the mob that thronged the lobbies.

Lord George presented his petition in the Commons and demanded its immediate consideration. By a vote of 192 to 7 adjournment was promptly voted. General Conway and Colonel Gordon, a relative of Lord George, defied the rioters. The Colonel informed them that he would plunge his sword into Lord George's body the moment that any of them entered the hall. At nine the troops appeared and the crowd surrounding Parliament was dispersed. That night the private chapels of two of the foreign ministers from Catholic states were plundered and burned, but little other damage occurred for forty hours. Agitators gradually worked the mob into a frenzy and the real rioting began. Catholic chapels in various quarters of London were gutted and set on fire. The house of Sir George Savile, who had been the chief proponent of the Catholic Relief Bill, was totally destroyed. The various branches of the constabulary were impotent and hardly attempted to control the situation. A handful of rioters were jailed in Newgate Prison, which had just been rebuilt at a cost of £40,000. The mob demanded their release and when this was courageously refused they broke into the jail, freed three hundred persons imprisoned there, and burned the building to the ground. Wednesday, June 7, was long known as "Black Wednesday." The city officials were cowed. Many of the magistrates had fled from London. Samuel Johnson records that on his way to view the Newgate ruins he happened upon a group, "... plundering the Sessions-House of the Old Bailey. They were not, I believe, a hundred; but they did their work at leisure, in full security, without sentinels, without trepidation, as men lawfully employed in full day."

On "Black Wednesday" thirty-six fires were set in London, and if the night had not been wind-still there could have been a holocaust far worse than the great London fire of 1666.\* The prisoners were released from King's Bench Prison, Fleet Prison and Brideswell, and the buildings were all given over to flames. During the Gordon riots all of the fourteen prisons in the city of London but one—the Poultry

\*In 1666 a fire, which began in a bake shop, fed by high winds, raged for four days and nights and laid waste most of London.

—were destroyed. A rumor spread that the insane were to be released from Bedlam and the lions let out of the Tower. “No Popery” was chalked over the walls of dwellings, householders were made to fly blue insignia from their windows by day and festively illuminate their houses by night. Resistance to the rioters was localized at a few points. A concerted attack on the Bank of England was repulsed by the military. On this occasion John Wilkes distinguished himself by his courageous defiance of the mob. It was a new experience for him to be serving in defense of the established order; the last great riots in London had been instigated by him. The most terrible outrages occurred when the distilleries of a Catholic named Langdale were sacked and burned. Thousands of men, women and children scooped up with their hands and hats the liquor which flowed into the streets. Many got so drunk that they stumbled into the flames.

The riot got rapidly out of control because of the inertness of the authorities.\* The one leader who demanded quick and determined action was George III. He was by nature opposed to dilatory tactics as soon as it became clear in what direction duty lay, and he had an intense hatred of resistance to authority. Anti-Catholic himself and opposed to the legal toleration of all who dissented from the beliefs of the Established Church, he still had the character and courage to combat mob rule with all his strength.

“Lord North cannot be much surprised,” the King wrote on the day before “Black Wednesday,” “at my not thinking the House of Commons have this day advanced so far in the present business as the exigency of the times required; the allowing Lord George, the avowed head of the Tumult, to be at large certainly encourages the continuation of it, to which is to be added the great supineness of the Civil Magistrates. . . .” On “Black Wednesday” he called a special meeting of the Privy Council. Two legal questions were propounded—what provocation was needed for a Magistrate to order the military to fire upon a riotous mob, and whether the riot acts had to be read some time in advance of such action. Wedderburn, the Attorney-Gen-

\*Such hostility had been engendered by the ruthless interference of the armed forces during the Wilkes riots of 1769 that many of the government leaders feared that drastic action would create further unpopularity and endanger the life of the Ministry. Johnson had declared: “The characteristic of our government at present is imbecility. The magistrates dare not call the Guards for fear of being hanged. The Guards will not come for fear of being given up to the blind rage of popular juries.”

eral, was of the opinion that if a mob were in the act of committing a felony, and could not be stopped by any other means, the soldiers were justified in firing immediately. Many of the Council hesitated to accept this view and there was a striking lack of unanimity as to what course to follow. The interference of the armed forces during the Wilkes riots of 1768 had produced such widespread hostility that many of the government leaders feared that its repetition might threaten the life of the weakened Ministry. King George announced that if it became necessary he would lead the Guards in person and disperse the mob. "I lament the conduct of the Magistrates," he declaimed dramatically, "but I can answer for one, one who will do his duty."

The King assumed full responsibility and immediately instructed the military to act. He was in constant communication with Lord Amherst, the leader of his forces. He slept very little. In forty-eight hours the rioting was at an end.

The King's attitude became rapidly known and gave heart to those striving to regain order. He was himself aware of the effect that his determined and courageous stand would have. On the 9th he wrote, "I hope every means are taken to find out the movers and abettors of the horrid Tumult we are now beginning to quell; Lord North has perhaps not yet heard that the Inhabitants Seeing they are Protected begin to regain Spirit in Southwark, Seventy armed Gentlemen joined the forces there to defend their Property, this spirit gains and will I trust shew that I have acted as I ought." Despite the numbers who were killed by the troops, George had no regrets in regard to his conduct. Young William Beckford attended the first levee after the riots. He recounts that he went with some of his Opposition friends ". . . who said if we did not go, the King would declare we were all leagued with Lord George." When the King spied the officer who had been in charge of the troops he turned toward him and, in his curious, nervous, repetitive manner declared, "You peppered them well, I hope peppered them well—peppered them well." The remark struck the company as very inappropriate. The officer gravely replied, "I hope Your Majesty's troops will always do their duty."

On several other occasions George III displayed this same flinty hardness. In the Wilkes riot he had advocated the slaughter of a few rioters to deter the rest of the mob. He enthusiastically favored enlisting the aborigines in the struggle against the rebellious colonists.

In 1797, when the naval mutiny broke out at the Nore, he did not hesitate to urge keeping fresh water from the men to bring them under control. It is significant that in each case it was the revolt against constituted authority that evoked this drastic response.

By June 13 the riots were entirely over. The known dead were 285. One hundred and thirty-five persons were brought to trial. Fifty-nine were capitally convicted and twenty-one were executed. The remarkable dispatch with which the trials were conducted and the indiscriminate severity of the sentences created a good deal of criticism.

Through the whole ugly business Lord Gordon appears as a tragic and mentally unbalanced figure. Irresponsible himself, he had unleashed mad dogs that he could not control. At the attack on the Bank he exhorted his followers to retreat, but no attention was paid him. In his Protestant zeal, he went to see the beautiful Catholic widow, Mrs. Fitzherbert, to catechize her on her friendship with the young Prince of Wales. The lady's brother threw Gordon from the house and threatened to horsewhip him. On the disastrous June 7 he attempted to see the King, who sent him a note: "It is impossible for His Majesty to see Lord George Gordon until he has given sufficient Proof of his Loyalty and allegiance by employing those Means which he says are in his Power to quell the present Disturbances and restore Peace to this Capitol." On the 9th he was arrested at his home on Welbeck Street and questioned before the Privy Council for three hours, after which he was conducted to the Tower by a formidable array of soldiery. He was tried before Lord Mansfield on charges of "constructive treason." In order to prove the charge, the lawyers of the Crown had to show that he had anticipated, and actively engaged in, the outrages which occurred. Lord Erskine, one of the most skillful criminal lawyers that England has ever had, ably defended Lord Gordon. He won an acquittal by showing that the defendant had not only taken no part in the felonious depredations, but had tried to assist the government in their suppression.

Lord Gordon behaved strangely at his trial.\* All during the pro-

\*Lord George Gordon was a social enigma. The son of the third Duke of Gordon and a godson of George II, he had been conventionally educated at Eton and had entered the Navy. Sandwich refused to promise him the command of a ship and he resigned shortly before the outbreak of the American War. In 1774, when only 23, he entered Parliament from the pocket borough of Ludgershall, where his efforts were far from brilliant. Samuel Romilly, an able and liberal member of Parliament, wrote, "From what I knew of Lord George Gordon before the present disturbances (which by the way, was only by having heard him often

cedure he kept a quarto Bible before him and showed great anger when he was not permitted to read aloud four chapters of Zechariah. After his acquittal, he remained in London. He was generally regarded as crack-brained, interesting himself in various lost causes. Having been, in form, excommunicated by the Church of St. Mary-le-bone, he was converted to Judaism and underwent circumcision, which in the pre-anæsthetic era was an extremely painful ordeal to an adult. He was an odd figure, garbed in the black cloak worn by pious Jews, and with his pale face covered with a long red beard. In 1787 he was charged with libelling the French Queen, Marie Antoinette. He fled to Amsterdam but was there arrested and returned to England, where he was tried and fined, and sentenced to five years in prison. When his sentence was up he was brought before the King's Bench to give security. At the hearing he refused to remove his hat. When it was forcibly removed, he put upon his head the little cap frequently worn indoors by Jews. Being unable to furnish security, he was re-committed to Newgate Prison, where he died of jail fever (typhus) in ten months at the age of forty-two. Even the poor, deluded man's death was a cause of strife. The more fanatical members of the Jewish community refused to have him buried in their cemetery as he had requested.

The anti-Catholic riots of 1780 were so terrifying that they had a profound political effect. They seriously retarded the progress of social reform by furnishing the conservative ruling class with an excellent rationalization for blocking any efforts at social amelioration. The conservative Lords felt that their old views of the worthlessness of the "other half" had been indelibly affirmed. Even as late as 1801 Lord Liverpool opposed Catholic Toleration because he feared a repetition of the Gordon Riots. Their second effect was a remarkable

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speaking in the House of Commons), I never thought him a man from which his country had much to dread. He spoke, indeed upon all occasions, but his speeches were incoherent and ridiculous. One day, I remember, he read a newspaper as part of his speech; at another time, he kept the whole House waiting two hours while he read them an Irish pamphlet. He seemed the less dangerous as he had not the support of either party; one day he attacked the Ministry, the next the Opposition and sometimes both the one and the other. It has happened to him to divide the House, when he alone voted for a question to which every other member gave his negative. . . . He is endowed with a spirit of enthusiasm, and with the most determined resolution; add to this, that his manner of speaking not being the least declamatory, but in the style of conversation, is most capable of working an effect upon an ignorant audience."

strengthening of the government. All the people who had anything—and in the eighteenth century suffrage was denied to those who had nothing—tightened their grips on their possessions, by supporting the ultra-conservative policies of their King, who had so wisely and courageously come to their defense.

During his long life, George III had abundant opportunity to demonstrate his personal courage. No less than six attempts were made to assassinate him. He had a horror of cowardice and a disdain of personal danger and very often went about without any military escort. The first attempted assassination occurred in 1786. Up to that time any subject who wished personally to present a memorial to the King was allowed to do so. In August a young woman approached King George. She extended a scroll with one hand while with the other she made a direct thrust at his heart with a knife. With the second lunge the thin blade broke against his body. "The poor creature is mad," he immediately exclaimed to the crowd that had seized her; "do not hurt her; she has not hurt me." The young woman, Margaret Nicholson, a barber's daughter, who had been employed as a domestic, had the delusion that the Crown was hers by right, and that if it were withheld from her, England would be washed in blood for a thousand years. Ill with paranoid dementia præcox, she must have been badly confused and obviously disordered; for after two examinations before the Privy Council she was committed to Bedlam without a public trial. She was in the institution for forty years before she died, and formed one of the chief exhibits for the pleasure-seekers who went there.

In 1790, as the King was on his way to open Parliament after the recess, an Army Lieutenant, John Frith, threw a large stone into his carriage. Frith was first kept at Newgate but was soon transferred to Bedlam. In 1795 economic conditions had forced the price of food very high, and on October 29 lines of malcontents thronged both sides of the thoroughfares to Parliament. As the royal carriage passed Whitehall en route to Westminster, George was fired at from an empty house. On the return all of the windows of the royal coach were shattered and the King was struck several times with missiles. His cool audacity was magnificent. Lord Colchester wrote in his diary, "When the shot was fired, Lord Westmoreland and Lord Onslow, who were in the coach, were extremely agitated, but the King bade them be

still; afterwards he said, 'My Lords, you are supposing this and proposing that, but there is One who disposes of all things, and in Him I trust.'" When a stone was thrown through the glass of the coach on the return trip, he said, pointing to the hole, "That is a stone—you see the difference from a bullet." When another stone lodged in his sleeve, he gave it to Lord Onslow, saying, "My Lord, keep this as a memorandum of the civilities which we have received." In the following February the royal carriage was stoned while returning from Drury Lane Theatre. The Queen was hit in the cheek. Despite the posting of £1000 reward, the culprit was never caught.

On the morning of May 15, 1800, two shots were fired while the King was reviewing troops in Hyde Park. One of the bullets entered the thigh of a man standing near him. It was felt certain that it was an attempted assassination and since the malefactor had not been apprehended, the monarch had been advised not to appear in public. But George, with his fatalistic resignation to the will of Providence, paid no heed to such warnings. "I very well know," he remarked, "that any man who chooses to sacrifice his own life may, whenever he pleases, take away mine, riding out, as I do continually, with a single equerry and a footman. I only hope that whoever may attempt it will not do it in a barbarous or brutal manner."

That evening the King insisted on going to Drury Lane Theatre as he had planned. There an ex-soldier named Hadfield was nearly successful in his attempt to assassinate him. As the royal family entered their box to see Colley Cibber's comedy, "She Would and She Would Not," he fired a horse pistol from the first row of the pit, which missed its target by a very narrow margin. Mr. Kelly, the musical director of the theatre, gave his account of the royal behavior: "The moment he entered the box, a man in the pit, next the orchestra, on the right hand, stood upon the bench, and discharged a pistol at our august Monarch as he came to the front of the box. Never shall I forget his Majesty's coolness; the whole audience was in an uproar. The King, on hearing the report of the pistol, retired a pace or two, stopped, and stood firmly for an instant; then came forward to the very front of the box, put his opera-glass to his eye, and looked round the house without the smallest appearance of alarm or discomposure." The Lord Chamberlain suggested that the King leave his box for an adjoining room. "Sir," he replied, "you discompose me as well as yourself: I shall not stir one step." Nathaniel Wraxall says, "And so little

were his nerves shaken that shortly thereafter he took his accustomed doze of three or four minutes between the conclusion of the play and the commencement of the farce." Mr. Kelly's narrative continues, "Hadfield, the ruffian who committed the crime, was seized by the performers in the orchestra and dragged over its spikes into the music-room which was under the stage; the audience from all parts vociferating, 'Bring forward the assassin!—bring him on the stage!—show him, show him!' Then I came forward and addressed the audience, assuring them that the culprit was in safe custody, undergoing an examination by his Royal Highness, the Duke of York, Mr. Sheridan,\* and Sir William Addington; but with the immense crowds about the doors and under the stage, in the confusion he might possibly escape, should they insist on his being brought forward. . . . At the end of the play, 'God Save the King!' was again demanded by the whole house; and while we were singing it, a paper was sent to me by Mr. Sheridan with a verse which he had written on the spur of the moment. It was handed to me by Mrs. Jordan, and I sang it, although with an agitated voice. It was as follows:

From every latent foe,  
From the assassin's blow  
God Save the King!  
O'er him thine arm extend,  
For Britain's sake defend  
Our father, prince and friend,  
God Save the King!

This stanza was three times repeated with most rapturous approbation."

Hadfield was defended before the Court of the King's Bench by the great Erskine, who succeeded in having him committed as insane to Bedlam. He showed that his client was not a ruffian, as he had been called, but a soldier who six years before had nearly made the supreme sacrifice for his King and country. While serving with the Light Dragoons at Roubaux, a French swordsman had inflicted several blows that had pierced the skull and entered the brain. Left for dead on the battlefield, he was finally discovered and taken to a surgeon. He remained delirious for a long time. In 1796 he had to be committed as insane but was later released. The murderous attempt

\*Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the dramatist, the Whig politician, and the managing director of the theatre.



on the life of his sovereign was the logical result of an insane delusion. He felt that he was destined to save mankind, but in order to accomplish this he must die at the hands of his fellow men, just as Christ had done eighteen hundred years earlier. Like many insane individuals, he showed great wisdom in planning the way to reach his mad goal, for regicide was the one crime in England for which even an insane man could be executed.

The sixth design on the life of George III was aborted while it was still a plot. Colonel Despard, who had served with distinction in the 50th Regiment in the West Indies, planned, together with a half dozen ruffians, to fire a piece of the French ordnance that stood in St. James's Park and which had recently been captured in Egypt, at the royal carriage as the King was on his way to open Parliament in October, 1802. They were then going to seize the Bank of England and the Tower.\* At Despard's trial Nelson testified on his behalf. "We went on the Spanish Main together," he said. "We spent many nights together in our clothes upon the ground. We have measured the height of the enemy's wall together. In all that time no man could have shown more zealous attachment." Despite such testimony the colonel and his companions were found guilty and executed on the roof of Horsemonger Lane Gaol. George was completely unruffled when he heard of the plot. "The King's composure in hearing of Despard's horrid designs," wrote Malmesbury, "was remarkable, and evinces a strength of mind, and tranquility of conscience, that proves him to be the best of men." Sufferers from manic-depressive insanity often show great courage and imperturbability in the face of danger.

\*Jesse says that "reduced to penury by having been suddenly deprived of an office which he held on the coast of Honduras, and goaded almost to a frenzy by having been subjected to a long and arbitrary imprisonment in Cold Bath Fields Prison without having been able to obtain a trial, this once gallant soldier and loyal subject engaged in the wild conspiracy which unhappily cost him his life."

## CHAPTER XII



*"Only think, Sir, it was a struggle between George III's  
sceptre and Mr. Fox's tongue."*

SAMUEL JOHNSON

GEORGE III'S EQUANIMITY in the face of personal danger was in contrast to his intense perturbation in political crises. In 1783, after finally facing the fact that America had achieved her independence, his mental equilibrium was threatened by the political coalition between Lord North and Charles James Fox. To appreciate George III's attitude toward Fox, one must study that engaging and difficult personality and his relations with his King. The two men were the very antithesis of each other. As Hobhouse has emphasized, Fox was a direct descendant of Charles II and was fundamentally a Stuart. He had the inconsistency of the Stuarts, their turbulence, their opportunism and their charm. Indeed, it would be hard to find more dissimilar strains than those of the Stuarts and the Hanoverian Guelphs.

Charles Fox began his Parliamentary career as a supporter of the government. He was a violent anti-Wilkite, and he opposed the publication of parliamentary proceedings. He first came into political conflict with the King over the Royal Marriage Act in 1772, and chose to resign his Admiralty post rather than give support to so repugnant a bill. After this move, North gave him a Treasury place because he was afraid to have a young man of such brilliant political promise in the camp of the Opposition. But Fox soon developed into an uncontrollable rebel. He placed his chief under great embarrassment by introducing a motion to which North was strongly opposed. George III vehemently expressed his opinion of such conduct. "I am greatly incensed at the presumption of Charles Fox," he wrote North, "in obliging You to vote with him that night, but approve much of Your making Your friends vote in the Majority; indeed, that Young Man has so thoroughly

cast off every principle of common honour and honesty that he must become as contemptible as he is odious; and I hope that You will let him know that You are not insensible to his conduct towards You." Within a fortnight Fox received a rather unique official communication from Lord North. "His Majesty," it read, "has thought proper to order a new Commission of the Treasury to be made out, in which I do not see your name."

Thus Fox's political fortunes reached a low point. He had acquired the enmity of both North and the King, and had little to hope for from either. Early in 1774, under the inspiration of Edmund Burke, he became an avowed champion of the American cause. By nature and training he had a love of liberty and an admiration for courage. He had no sympathy for England's desire to dictate American policies and coerce the colonists into accepting them through intimidation. As in everything that he did, he threw himself whole-heartedly into the struggle, even adopting the Blue and Buff of Washington's soldiers as his dress in the House of Commons.

George III's letter, directing the political tactics of the Ministry in November, 1776, serves as testimonial of Fox's effectiveness in opposing the government. "I had learnt from Lord Weymouth," the King wrote to North, "that Charles Fox had declared at Arthur's last night that he should attend the business of the House this day, and either tomorrow or Sunday should set out for Paris, and not return till after the recess. I think therefore You cannot do better than bring as much forward during the time Parliament shall be assembled as can with propriety be done, as real business is never so well considered as when the Attention of the House is not taken up by noisy declamations."

When the American War got well under way, many of the Whig leaders, convinced that opposition to a government so firmly entrenched in Parliament through royal influence and patronage was useless, left off attending Parliament. But this was not Fox's way of doing things. He constantly hammered away at the impregnable castle, hurling invective at the government leaders that has rarely been surpassed in its savage bitterness. He described Lord North as "a lump of deformity and disease, of folly and wickedness, of ignorance and temerity smitten with pride."

Finally in March, 1782, North's administration came to an end, and George found himself forced, much against his will, to include Fox

in the new Rockingham government. The monarch played his part masterfully. After a short period in office, Fox wrote to a friend, "All this time, the King seems in perfect good humour and does not seem to make any of those difficulties which others make for him."

Following Rockingham's sudden death on July 1, 1782, Fox again found himself leading the Opposition. He and Shelburne had got along so badly as the two Secretaries of State under Rockingham that he felt it manifestly impossible to be in the new government, led by "the Jesuit of Berkeley Square."\* Fox's cardinal political principle was the complete independence of Parliament from domination by the Crown—or by the people, for that matter. Fox was convinced that the King had found in Shelburne another ally who would be a serious threat to Parliamentary freedom. He fought this new alliance with an intensity born out of political principle and personal spleen. A week after this administration began, the King wrote to North, "Lord North has long known my opinion of that gentleman [Fox] which has been if possible more riveted by three Months experience of Him in Office, which has finally determined Me never to employ Him again; consequently the contest is become personal and He indeed sees it also in that point of view." "The mask is now certainly cast off," he declared a week later. "It is no less than a struggle, whether I am to be dictated to by Mr. Fox, who avows that He must have the sole direction of this Country." The fight was on, and in less than a year Fox had beaten the King. On February 21, 1783, the government was given a vote of censure in the Commons and Shelburne resigned.

One of the most amazing confederations in the history of English politics was now launched—a coalition between Charles Fox and Lord North. The motives of these two men in making such a union are still unclear. According to the Parliamentary Reports, only the year before, "Mr. Fox said, from the moment he should make any terms with one of them [the North administration] he would rest satisfied to be called the most infamous of mankind. He could not, for one instant, think of a coalition with men who, in every public and private transaction, as ministers, had shown themselves void of every principle of honour and honesty."

How could men who were not merely cheap opportunistic politicians unite under these circumstances? Fox's participation was not, as some historians hold, a mere grab for power by the unscrupulous son of a

\*The King coined this name for Shelburne.

venal father. A few months before, when Pitt had suggested that he form a ministry with Shelburne, he had turned on Pitt in savage refusal. Fox despised Shelburne. He had a turbulent make-up—when he hated, he hated with intensity. And he clearly foresaw that if he did not unite his forces with those of North, Shelburne would probably do so. Fox also felt that coming into power with North, who had been personally so close to the King, he might be able to prevent further encroachment of the power of the Crown upon Parliament. He realized that the coalition would be condemned and ridiculed. But he was an intrepid gambler. In Parliament he made a rather feeble defense of his untenable position. "If men of honour," he said, "can meet on points of national concern, I see no reason for calling such a meeting an unnatural junction. It is neither wise nor noble to keep up animosities forever." In private interviews he let it be known that although officially his animus had, during previous years, been directed toward Lord North, it had in truth been an expression of his feelings toward the real head of the government, the King.

That North should have entered into a compact to unite with Fox seems even more remarkable, for there still existed a strong mutual affection between him and his sovereign, and he must have known that George would consider his participation a stab in the back. Surely North had no fondness for Fox; nor could he be accused of thirsting after power. During all but a brief portion of his previous long tenure of office he had been begging and threatening to resign. Why, then, at this juncture did he allow himself to be drawn back into the arena? An alliance with Fox would permit him to avenge himself on Shelburne, whom he despised. It would probably help in securing a better peace from the unsuccessful American War, for which North felt a great responsibility. Most of all it would please his office-seeking friends, who had enlisted the aid of Lady North and his children in persuading him to return to office. He finally yielded to the pressure and joined forces with Fox.\*

George III's situation was tragic. As soon as he was aware that the formation of this incredible coalition was probable he became panic-stricken. He did not view it as a political union, but as a criminal conspiracy. He tried to induce every possible candidate to form a govern-

\*John Townshend was one of the prime movers in promoting the coalition. He later said that he, Lord North's second son, George, William Adam, the duellist, Burke and Eden were the chief instigators. Fox had great faith in Townshend and Lord North was much affected by his son's advice.

ment, so that he would not be forced to call upon these two men to do so. But all of the important political figures realized that the combined forces of Fox and North could muster a majority in the House of Commons to defeat a government under any other leader. The King obstinately persisted in his efforts. William Pitt, the second son of the great Chatham, was exhorted to form a government and for one day appeared receptive. He then consulted his mother, who had been called "the cleverest man of her times in politics and business,"\* and refused to undertake the task. At twenty-four he rejected the chance to be England's First Minister. The King was deeply disappointed. "I am much hurt," he wrote him, "to find you are determined to decline at an hour when those who have any regard for the Constitution as established by law ought to stand forth against the most daring and unprincipled faction that the annals of this country ever produced."

In addition to his personal antipathy toward Fox and his bitter disappointment in Lord North, the King felt that a serious constitutional question was involved. It was his conviction that it was the privilege of the King of Great Britain to choose his own ministers. Obviously such was not then the case; he was being forced by political groups in the House of Commons to take two of the men he least desired. On March 24, after the country had been without a Ministry for more than a month, an address was voted almost unanimously in the House of Commons urging the King to form a Ministry immediately. This was in effect a demand that he accept the Fox-North coalition; but George obstinately persisted in his efforts to escape the inevitable. A week later a second and stronger resolution demanding the formation of a Ministry was passed. The bitterest potion of all was that the Prince of Wales had publicly allied himself with Charles Fox. When politicians appealed to young George for inside news, he said that his father had declared he would not accept a coalition. "But by God," said the Prince, "he shall be made to agree to it."

For several days, at the height of the crisis, the monarch of Great Britain considered flight. His message of abdication composed in this extremity is a dignified and moving document. He declared that his attempts to establish a government including the most efficient men

\*She occupies a unique place in English history as the wife and mother of two of the greatest men of the century. One of her grandchildren asked her late in life whether his grandfather or his uncle William was the greater man. Unhesitatingly she answered that it was his grandfather.

of all parties had been blocked, "by the obstinacy of a powerful party that has long publicly manifested a resolution not to aid in the service of the Empire unless the whole executive management of affairs is thrown entirely into its hands. . . . At the same time want of zeal prevents others from standing forth at this critical conjuncture. My obedience to the Oath I took at my coronation prevents me exceeding the powers vested in me, or submitting to be a cipher in the trammels of any self-created band. I must therefore end a conflict which certainly puts a stop to every wheel of government, make a final decision, and that I think myself compelled to do in this assembly of the whole legislature. . . . I am therefore resolved to resign my Crown and all the dominions appertaining to it to the Prince of Wales, my eldest son and lawful heir, and to retire to the care of my Electoral dominions, the original patrimony of my ancestors. . . . May that all Wise Providence who can direct the inmost thoughts as well as actions of man give my son and successor not only every assistance in guiding his conduct, but restore that sense of religious and moral duties in this kingdom to the want of which every evil that has arisen owes its source; and may I to the latest hour of my life, though now resolved forever to quit this island, have the comfort of hearing that the endeavours of my son, though they cannot be more sincere than mine have been for the prosperity of Great Britain, may be crowned with better success."

George III was dissuaded from abdicating by Thomas Pitt, who advised accepting the coalition Ministry and generously yielding them rope with which to hang themselves. Long before the Ministry became a reality it had become obvious that it would be unpopular in every quarter.\* Protest meetings against the coalition were held in several counties. At one of them a fox was burned alive. For the first time in twenty-three years, the King was about to ally himself with the popular side in a political controversy. Thomas Pitt remarked that, even though George III were forced to accept the ministers, he could not be compelled to grant them favors, without which the Ministry would die of attrition.

\*She occupies a unique place in English history as the wife and mother of a king who preserved his amiability. One of the members of the House, Martin, suggested that there should be a starling in the lobby to continually croak, "No coalition, no coalition." North said that he saw merits in the proposal, but that he felt the employment of a starling unnecessary so long as the House could boast of a Martin to execute this important function.

Finally, on April 2, the coalition Ministry which the King referred to as "my son's ministry," took definite form. The Duke of Portland was its nominal head as First Lord of the Treasury, while Fox and North were the Secretaries of State. A great number of caricatures and bon mots appeared immediately. The political union of Fox and North seemed so ridiculously incongruous that it invited farcical treatment. Lord Townshend, who was present when Charles Fox kissed hands, "observed George III turn back his ears and eyes just like the horse at Astley's circus when the tailor he had determined to throw was getting on him." Horace Walpole, as usual, rose to the occasion. When the *Gazette* announced in its official language, "His Majesty was pleased to appoint Mr. Charles Fox, Foreign Secretary," Walpole wrote, "This is not the Lord's doings, but the Commons'; and it is marvellous in our eyes."

The month of March, 1783—the time when all this turmoil was at its height—was a period in which it was impossible for George III to maintain emotional stability. William Grenville has left an important account of a conversation which began at 11:00 on the night of March 16 and lasted until 1:00 A.M., in which the King exhibited the flight of ideas and push of speech which is notable in all degrees of manic excitement. To his brother, Lord Temple, young Grenville wrote, "From the inconceivable quickness with which the King ran on upon the different subjects of it, I found it very difficult to put in even the little which I thought it right to say." Grenville then recounted the details which the King gave him of his various frantic efforts to form a Ministry of his own liking. The King confessed that "he tried the Cabinet all around but none had the spirit to stand forth." The letter continued: "This, I think, was the main jut of the conversation to this point; though I have thrown it much more into form than it was spoken—as it was interrupted by a great variety of digressions; upon the coalition in the reprobating of which I took care to join with him most heartily; upon Fox, whom he loaded with every expression of abhorrence; against the Duke of Portland, against whom he was a little less violent; upon Lord North, to whose conduct he imputed all the disasters of the country; upon American Independence, which seems to have been a most bitter pill indeed; upon associations and reforms, clubs, gaming houses, aristocratic cabals, etc., etc., together with much enquiry into the state of Ireland, and the characters and conduct of the people there; and a long detail about Lord Bellamont, who he believed





In Georgian days, the political cartoonists were strangers to delicacy. This comparatively mild example, "The New Administration or the State Quacks Administ'ring," shows Charles Fox and Lord North, the Coalition ministers, about to give Britannia an enema. It was published in 1783



"The Constant Couple," published in 1786, was a gibe at the marital constancy and parsimony of George and Charlotte, depicted travelling from St. James's Palace to Windsor

was crack-brained. . . ." Obviously, the harassed monarch was much distracted. On March 30 Walpole notes in his Journal, "The King was ill, and fell away with much vexation."

George III made no effort to hide his true feelings toward the members of a government that he had termed "the most unprincipled coalition the annals of this or any other nation can equal." At his levees he was ostentatiously cordial to the men who were "out" and pointedly frigid to the group that was "in." To Lord Temple he wrote on April 1, "A Ministry which I have avowedly attempted to avoid, by calling on every other description of Men, cannot be supposed to have either My favour or confidence and as such I shall certainly refuse any honours that may be asked by them; I trust the eyes of the Nation will soon be opened as my sorrow may prove fatal to my health if I remain long in this thralldom."

The first real passage-at-arms between the King and his new ministers came over the annual allowance to be granted the Prince of Wales when he became twenty-one in August, 1783. The relations between that young man and certain politicians had already become a very tender point with King George. Shelburne, in order to court the Prince's favor, had assured him that he would get him the generous sum of £100,000 annually. Charles Fox, over the protests of some of his fellow Cabinet members, felt himself under the necessity of treating his important and loyal young friend with equal generosity. When the Duke of Portland informed his Majesty of the Cabinet's decision, he momentarily acquiesced, stating that he would leave this matter up to them. But he soon recanted. "When the Duke of Portland came into Office," he wrote with great bitterness, "I had at least hoped he would have thought himself obliged to have my interest and that of the Public at heart, and not have neglected both to gratify the passions of an ill advised Young Man."

The King's stand in the matter of his son's allowance was not prompted primarily by his desire to embarrass the despised Ministry. £100,000 a year was much more than he had required as a young man and was more than his father had been granted as Prince of Wales. George III was parsimonious in regard to his own expenditures and he was bitterly opposed to personal extravagances. He had already had abundant evidence of his first-born's drive toward dissolute indulgences. Had not the Prince, at eighteen, been seriously involved with an actress? Was he not even now £29,000 in debt to tradesmen? A luxurious

allowance would only plunge him further into vice. Moreover, having the coalition responsible for securing so magnificent an allowance would cement a relationship which was already too close.

George quite unfairly held Fox responsible for the Prince of Wales' notorious libertinism. Fox had become friendly with the Prince at parties given by the King's brother, the ostracized Duke of Cumberland, and his wife. The King did not realize that his son had become an accomplished rake before his friendship with Fox developed. The distraught monarch became so exercised that he begged Lord Chancellor Thurlow to sue Charles Fox for having alienated his son from him. The King got little consolation from the gruff response. "There is nothing to be done," Thurlow told the King, "and Your Majesty can expect little peace until both your son and his friend are secured in the Tower."

For a time the King felt that the Prince's allowance might be made the issue which would lead to the destruction of the coalition Ministry. He made the counter-proposal of £50,000 a year, besides the revenues of the Duchy of Cornwall, which amounted to £12,000, and a parliamentary grant to pay the current debts and to create an establishment for the Prince. Fox felt obliged to stand his ground even though he believed that by so doing he was forfeiting the life of the Ministry. To Northington he later wrote, "They would have had on their side the various cries of paternal authority—economy—moderate establishment—mischiefmaking between father and son, and many other plausible topics." The second Earl of Temple, an astute politician on whom the King was then largely relying for counsel, strongly advised against attempting to destroy the Ministry at that time. He felt that another change in ministry would further postpone definitive treaties with the nations with whom England had lately been at war. Moreover, he felt that the terms of peace must be such that it would be better to have the resultant odium fall upon the coalition Ministry than upon its successor. The King granted the wisdom of the advice, but it conflicted seriously with his obsessive desire to be rid of the North-Fox government. He wondered how soon he would again have so favorable an issue over which to challenge the life of the Ministry. He was again in a quandary, but finally decided to yield to Fox's demand. Portland was summoned to the King "who, in agony of tears, kissed the Duke, confessed he had gone too far, and begged the Duke to rescue him."

Meanwhile, the Ministry itself had been on the verge of dissolution

from internal dissension over what course to follow. It was finally determined to accept the proposition of the King, in order to meet the rising tide of political opinion. Fox was sent to persuade his young friend to accept the more meager pecuniary arrangements outlined by his father. What arguments he employed we do not know. Fox, himself a master in the art of exceeding an allowance, probably found it easy to persuade the Prince that he would not have to live within the financial schedule outlined for him. The letter of acquiescence written by the Prince, who it is said, "had a fever with vexation" when he learned of his father's sudden opposition to the granting of the £100,000 allowance, suggests some such happy solution:

Queen's House,  
June 18, 1783

Dear Charles,

After what has already passed, I did not require this additional proof of your friendship and attachment; and you will see a letter I have this instant written to the Duke of Portland, how ready I am to take your advice, and that I leave it entirely to the Cabinet.

Yours most sincerely,  
GEORGE P.

The King's disturbance over the Prince of Wales' unfilial behavior was heightened by the sudden death of his four-year-old son Octavius. George III always showed an overwhelming affection for his children in babyhood, and the fair-haired Octavius had particularly endeared himself to his father. The loss caused him deep grief but he accepted it with religious resignation. "The little object we are deploring," he wrote Bishop Hurd of Worcester, "was known to you, and consequently his merits; therefore, you will not be surprised that the blow is strong. We both call on the sole assistant to those in distress, the dictator of religion . . . I think this a very proper time for renewing the baptismal vow; and, though greatly grieved, I feel true submission to the decrees of Providence, and great thankfulness for having enjoyed for four years that dear infant."

The mood of the King at this time was more than one of normal unhappiness—it had overtones of a pathological depression. He said to Lord Hertford, "Every morning I wish myself eighty, ninety, or dead."

In depressive attacks there is generally a diurnal variation of mood—the patient feels worse in the morning than later in the day. Nathaniel

Wraxall's account of George III's behavior during this period also fits the picture of a depression: "The King became a prey to habitual dejection. Throughout all the troubles of his reign, when Wilkes and when 'Junius' excited disaffection among his Subjects, as well as the most distressful periods of the American War; or when the Capital exhibited scenes of outrage and of popular violence; he had maintained a serene countenance and manifested an unshaken firmness. But his fortitude sunk under the bondage to which 'the Coalition' had subjected him. His natural equality of temper, suavity of manners, and cheerfulness of deportment, forsaking him in a great measure, he became silent, thoughtful, taciturn and uncommunicative. Sometimes, when he resided at Windsor, mounting his horse, accompanied by an Equerry and a single footman, after riding ten or twelve miles, scarcely opening his lips, he would dismount in order to inspect his hounds, or to view his farming improvements; then getting on horseback again, he returned back to the Queen's Lodge in the same pensive or disconsolate manner . . . he even repeated . . . his wish already expressed, of going over to his Electoral Dominions for a few months; and abandoning to the Ministers the power of which they had got possession." Evidently, there had been a period of mild manic excitement, marked chiefly by overtalkativeness and straying from the topic, just before the coalition came into office. This was followed by a mild depression. The swing of the pendulum from mild states of excitement to mild periods of dejection is typical of a manic-depressive disorder.

Fox and his colleagues felt that the Ministry had been considerably strengthened by its ability to survive the dispute over the allowance to the Prince of Wales. But their sense of security had no foundation, for it was evident that the King's general attitude had not materially changed. Although civil to his ministers, he made no efforts to dissimulate. In a letter to Fox on the treaty with France, he wrote: "In states as well as in Men, where dislike has once arose, I never expect to see cordiality." The Ministry was distrusted by all classes of society. The three per cent Consols (the Consolidated Government Securities) that were at 70 when the Ministry took office, fell to 56 during the winter. The political caricaturists were doing a flourishing business. Young William Pitt, who was fast coming to the front in the House of Commons, was mercilessly exposing the government's many vulnerable spots and excoriating them.

This marked the beginning of one of the most inveterate and intense political rivalries of the eighteenth century. Fox and Pitt, as leaders of opposing political parties, were destined to be in competition with each other almost as long as they lived. (Fate ironically decreed that even after their deaths, which occurred within a few months, they should lie side by side in the Abbey.) They were both phenomenal men. Like two young thoroughbred race horses, with great sires, they were bred and trained for politics. They both developed into wonderful creatures, despite the fact that Fox was always given the soft bit and was allowed to graze where and when he would, and Pitt, on the other hand, had a tight rein used early on him and was kept under the closest supervision.

Charles' father, Henry Fox, had said, "Let nothing be done to break his spirit. The world will do that business fast enough. . . . He is a very sensible little boy and will learn to curb himself." The degree of indulgence which he permitted this tempestuous and brilliant child was remarkable. At six Charles became an avid reader of drama. At seven he was permitted to choose his own school, the father merely remarking, "Charles determines to go to Wandsworth."\* At nine he insisted on transferring to Eton and went into the fourth form. At fourteen he was taken abroad and turned loose in gambling rooms with five guineas a night as tuition fee. Lord Mansfield made the remarkable comment to his neighbor, when Charles was visiting Parliament as a small boy, "That is Fox's son Charles, with twice his parts and half his sagacity."

Pitt was equally precocious; he was able to write a very good Latin letter at the age of seven; but he was a delicate child. He was tutored at home until he was fourteen. His father had rigid ideas of pedagogy. He disparaged Henry Fox's methods, asserting that "he educated his little children without the least regard to morality, and with such extravagant vulgar indulgence, that the great change which has taken place among our youth has been dated from the time of his sons' going to Eton." Charles Fox's mother showed rare prescience in what she wrote

\*Among Henry Fox's other unconventional dicta on the subject of children's upbringing were: "Young people are always in the right and old people in the wrong," and "Never do today what you can put off till tomorrow, or ever do yourself what you can get anyone else to do for you." If, in a fit of temper, little Charles wished to stamp on a gold watch or if he had the whim to wash his hands in a bowl of cream, the fond father merely said, "Very well, if you must, I suppose you must."

to her husband about little William Pitt, ten years Charles's junior. "I have been this morning with Lady Hester Pitt, and there is little William Pitt, *not eight years old*, and really the cleverest child I ever saw, and *brought up so strictly and so proper in his behaviour*, that, *mark my words*, that little boy will be a thorn in Charles's side as long as he lives."

Little William Pitt is credited with having said, when he was eight, "I am glad I am not the eldest son. I should like to speak in the House of Commons like Papa." At ten he was given public speaking lessons by his great father. The elder Pitt decided against sending his son to Eton. He said that he had "scarce observed a boy who was not cowed for life at Eton; a public school might suit a boy of turbulent forward disposition, but would not do where there was any gentleness."

These gifted boys matured into men whose personalities and dispositions were in sharp contrast. Pitt was thin, aloof, self-confident, and celibate—he always had complete control of himself. He began to gamble but found that it fascinated him so that he stopped abruptly. When faced with a crisis in Parliament, he would do his part and then go home and sleep—unless he were specially needed in the interval—until the tense moments were over. Fox was an obese, mercurial, outgoing and utterly charming fellow who was kind to his mistresses and generous to his friends. Although at one time he had gambling debts of more than £140,000, he insisted on playing faro rather than whist and piquet, at which his expertness made him an almost certain winner, because faro had the predominant element of chance that he loved.\* He would recover from bouts of hard drinking by reading the Latin and Greek classics or roaming the woods in search of nightingales. In preparation for an important debate, he once sat for twenty-two consecutive hours at a gambling table, losing £11,000. Although both men were great orators, their styles were altogether different. Porson said, "Mr. Pitt conceives his sentences before he utters them. Mr. Fox throws himself into the middle of his, and leaves it to God Almighty to get him out again." Or as Fox himself phrased it, Pitt was "never at a loss for *the* word, and I never at a loss for *a* word." Their contemporaries looked upon their encounters in Parliament much as one views athletic contests between two superb antagonists.

In November, 1783, Fox introduced the coalition Ministry's India Bill, realizing that he was playing with fire. For some years conditions

\*Appendix.



in India had been deplorable. The leading governmental agents and agencies were at loggerheads, while native insurgents were menacing the British control of India. The brutality of some of the English representatives had become revolting to an English populace which was far from oversensitive. Fox, inspired by the zeal of his great friend, Edmund Burke, felt it his duty to suggest remedial measures. He considered the situation challenging and he was not the man to dodge a dare. Two bills were introduced. One prescribed detailed regulations for the administration of affairs in India. The second established in England a Supreme Indian Council of seven men, replacing the existing Courts of Directors and Proprietors. The members of the Council were to be named by the Legislature and hold office for four years. During their term they were to exert complete dominion over Indian affairs and effect a complete reorganization of the personnel governing India. After four years had elapsed the King could either reappoint them or name their successors.

It was the second bill that brought on the storm. Indian patronage was of great importance and, since the Ministry controlled the Legislature in such matters, the bill gave the ministers great additional political power, for a four-year period. Ridiculous exaggerations of the potential effects of the bill were charged by its opponents. Pitt maintained that if the bill passed it would give the ministers so much power that they would become dangerous to the state. He stigmatized the bill as "one of the boldest, most unprecedented, most desperate, and alarming attempts at the exercise of tyranny that ever disgraced the annals of this or any other country." Lord Thurlow informed the King that it was a "plan to take more than half the royal power, and by that means disable the King for the rest of his reign." In Parliament he declared that should the bill pass "the King will in fact take the diadem from his own head and place it on the head of Mr. Fox."\*

Both Burke and Fox made extraordinarily fine speeches in its behalf. The bill passed its third reading in the Commons by a large majority, on December 8. It had been conceded that its passage through the House of Lords would be more difficult since the influence of the Crown was greater there. Although it was generally assumed that the King was hostile toward the measure, he did not actively participate in

\*Many who had no real political bias saw the falsity of such claims. The Duke of Marlborough wrote the King that he felt that the bill would increase the power of the Crown.

the fight against it until its second reading in the House of Lords on December 15. At that time he gave Temple a piece of paper, to show to loyal fellow peers, on which he had written "that His Majesty would deem those who voted for the Bill not only not his friends, but his enemies, and that if Lord Temple could put this in still stronger words, he had full authority to do so." The communication was circulated widely among the Lords. The King further commanded his Lords of the Bedchamber to vote against the measure. On the second reading the bill failed by a majority of eight and was finally thrown out on December 17 by a majority of nineteen.

Mad political excitement developed. On the 18th the House of Commons passed a resolution that it was a high crime and misdemeanor to report the King's opinion on any bill before Parliament, if the object were to influence votes. George III considered this as an affront and a challenge. That night, at 43 minutes past 10, he wrote to Lord North: "Lord North is by this required to send me the Seals of his department, and to acquaint Mr. Fox to send those of the Foreign department. Mr. Frazer or Mr. Nepean will be the proper channel of delivering them to me this night: I choose this method as audiences on such occasions must be unpleasant." It appears that Lord North had already retired when the messenger reached his home. He insisted that he see the minister personally. Instead of becoming angered at the King's neurotic precipitancy, North admitted the man to his bedroom. "If you see Lord North," he remarked good-humoredly, "you will see Lady North too." Then he promptly turned over and went to sleep.

The contest was over. As Samuel Johnson put it, "It was a struggle between George III's sceptre and Mr. Fox's tongue." He failed to mention that the sceptre had been transformed into a club. Summary dismissal of the Ministry under this provocation was a courageous—really a reckless—political move. Pitt was immediately sent for to take over the Treasury. Few thought that he could form a Ministry. The Whigs felt confident that a general election would have to be called and that they would return a large majority and regain control of the government.\*

But they had failed to measure the stature of their antagonist. When Pepper Arden announced in the House that William Pitt was to head the new Ministry, the Opposition appeared to be filled with merri-ment. His extreme youth, his hauteur, and his complete lack of interest

\*Appendix.

in women were the chief points of ridicule. Ellis lampooned him in the "Rolliad":

Above the rest, majestically great,  
Behold the infant Atlas of the State,  
The matchless miracle of modern days  
In whom Britannia to the world displays  
A sight to make surrounding nations stare,  
A Kingdom trusted to a schoolboy's care.

. . . . .

Alas! that flesh, so late by pedants scar'd  
Sore from the rod should suffer seats so hard.

In the *Political Miscellanies*, Pitt's immunity to feminine charms forms the subject of an epigram:

"No, No! for my virginity  
When I lose that," quoth Pitt, "I'll die."  
Cries Wilberforce, "If not till then  
By G—d, you must outlive all men!"

Not yet twenty-five and with only Wilberforce and Dundas to aid him, Pitt had to meet one of the greatest galaxies of political leaders in English history—Fox, North, Burke, Sheridan and Erskine. Such an array might have made even his great father quake.

Parliament adjourned for the Christmas recess on December 26 and reconvened on January 12, 1784. During the recess the favorite bon mot among the Whigs was, "Pitt may do what he likes during the holidays, but it will only be a mince pie administration." But they underestimated their youthful opponent, and determined upon a very unwise plan of action. Instead of immediately demanding a dissolution of Parliament and a general election, which at that time would have been favorably affected by the high-handed way in which they had been ousted, they contented themselves with passing frequent measures of censure. On the very first day that Pitt was at the helm he was five times defeated in the House of Commons. But he was well aware of the advantages to be gained from postponing the election.

He was practically alone in holding this view. George III advised the dissolution of Parliament as soon as the winter recess was over. This became a frequent point of debate between him and Pitt. It is an amazing picture—the boyish minister holding out against an indom-

itable sovereign nearly twice his age. Fortunately for Pitt, Sir Edward Walpole died early in the session, leaving the rich sinecure of Clerk of the Pells vacant. Instead of strengthening his political machine by offering this plum to some important political aspirant, granting it to some kinsman, or even seizing it himself, as Lord Chancellor Thurlow had advised him to do, Pitt gave it to Barré on the condition that he resign the £3000 pension awarded him by the Rockingham government. He thereby saved £3000 annually for the Treasury and evoked great admiration for himself. Here was the great son of a great father, who had inherited his noble parent's financial integrity and disinterestedness. Passing up this sinecure was no empty gesture on Pitt's part. He had a precariously small income and he was under great expense.

Those first months of 1784 would have taken the heart out of the most seasoned political leaders. Things even reached the point where Pitt offered to resign. The monarch is reported as having replied, "If you resign, Mr. Pitt, I must resign too." Several times the Commons petitioned the King to dismiss Pitt, but this only made George hold to his course with increased firmness. A definite dichotomy developed in Parliament. The King wrote to Pitt on February 15, "My present situation is, perhaps, the most singular that ever occurred, either in the annals of this or any other country; for the House of Lords, by not less a majority than was two to one, have declared in my favour; and my subjects at large, in a much more considerable proportion, are not less decided; to combat which, Opposition have only a majority of twenty or at most thirty in the House of Commons." A month later the Opposition's majority in the House of Commons had miraculously diminished to one. Pitt then informed the King that the time had at last come to take the sense of the nation; and on March 25 Parliament was dissolved, to be returned by a General Election. That night burglars broke into Lord Chancellor Thurlow's home and took as part of their loot the Great Seal which was used in making such a decree official. Calumniators accused Fox of having perpetrated the crime in order to delay the dissolution.

There had never been more intense interest in a parliamentary election. Both sides claimed that the life of the English Constitution was at stake. The results were amazing. The majority for Pitt and the King far surpassed even the most sanguine predictions. More than 160 members, nearly all of whom belonged to the Opposition, lost their places. When the new Parliament convened on May 18, Pitt had so great

a majority that it was clear that he was destined to be one of the most powerful ministers that England ever had.

But George was not satisfied to win the general election. He had an impassioned desire to see Charles Fox defeated in Westminster. During the forty days that the contest lasted the anxious King received reports nearly every hour. Westminster was a large borough and one in which a high percentage of the residents had the right of suffrage. The two other candidates were Admiral Hood, a great naval hero, and Sir Cecil Wray, a "Whig rat" who had been brought into Parliament by Fox and had deserted, declaring at the close of the session that it had become manifest that "the voice of the House of Commons was no longer the voice of the people of England." Wray was, of course, wholeheartedly supported by the Court. At first Fox was trailing behind. By the eleventh day he caught up to Wray, and passed him on the twenty-second day. A good campaigner, Fox spent every day on the hustings haranguing the crowds and matching wits with hecklers. One man called to him, "I admire your abilities but damn your principles," to which he retorted, "I applaud your sincerity, but damn your manners." Another offered him a hangman's halter, which he rejected with the sally that he did not wish to deprive the gentleman of what must be an old family relic.

The most unusual feature of the Westminster contest was the active electioneering by the twenty-seven-year-old Georgeanna, Duchess of Devonshire, who was known as one of the most beautiful women in England. Together with her sister, Lady Duncannon, she drove about Westminster every day in an open carriage personally soliciting votes and driving willing victims to the polling-place. "The Duchess of Devonshire is indefatigable in her canvass for Fox," wrote Lord Cornwallis. "She was in the most blackguard houses in Long Acre by eight o'clock this morning." She went about dressed in Fox's colors, buff and blue, with a large hat decorated with foxes' tails. As the contest grew more intense she publicly kissed a butcher in order to get his vote. No woman ever received more glowing tributes for her efforts than the beautiful Duchess:

Arrayed in matchless beauty, Devon's fair  
In Fox's favour takes a zealous part.  
But, oh! Where'er the pilferer comes—beware!  
She supplicates a vote and steals a heart.

Her electioneering tactics provided something of a Roman holiday for the populace. "Were I God Almighty I should make her Queen of Heaven," one of her admirers exclaimed devoutly—and another, "I could light my pipe at her eyes." Her performance was not dignified, perhaps, but it was effective. The government forces were furious at her success, and published all kinds of scurrility about her in their papers, *The Morning Post* and *The Advertiser*. On May 17 the polls closed with Hood and Fox elected.

As soon as the final results were known the celebrating began. There was a triumphal procession from Westminster to Devonshire House. A large banner floated in the breeze, inscribed with the words "Sacred to Female Patriotism." Fox was borne, in a chair decorated with laurel, on the shoulders of perspiring and loyal enthusiasts through an ecstatically happy mob. The Prince of Wales, who had boldly worn a fox's brush during the election, attended a review with the King on Ascot Heath that morning and then hastened back to London and clambered upon the wall around Devonshire House to join the Duchess in reviewing the procession in honor of his friend, who had beaten his father's candidate in the election. On the following morning the Prince gave a gala fete at Carlton House in honor of Fox's victory. No doubt the King heard the music and, over the low wall, saw the dancing as he rode by in his carriage of state to open Parliament. Surely, Lord North must have felt a bit sheepish to have King George see him dancing about arrayed in Fox's colors. In retaliation, the angered monarch struck the celebration of the birthday of the Prince of Wales off the list of court festivities.

## CHAPTER XIII



*"So to some King this evil doth belong;  
Th' intelligence is good, I make no doubt;  
Who really love their offspring when they're young,  
But lose that fond affection when they're stout."*

PETER PINDAR

**D**ESPITE HIS SON'S DISLOYALTY and Fox's triumph, George III had every reason to be pleased with the results of the 1784 election. The hateful Fox-North coalition was gone. William Pitt had won decisively. Freed from galling dependence on hostile politicians, the King felt like a man unchained. And a sudden wave of loyalty to the sovereign spread among the people. His courageous dismissal of the Fox-North coalition had won him general admiration. England now had a popular and stable government and she was at peace with the world. A period of unusual prosperity followed the disastrous American War and George seemed a changed man. "I never saw the King in such spirits," wrote the Duke of Dorset in October, 1786. "They rise in proportion to the stocks, which are beyond the sanguine expectations of everybody."

No longer plagued by the necessity of goading a sick or timorous minister into carrying on the responsibilities of office, George led the life that he loved—that of a squire. His nickname was "Farmer George" and in many respects it fitted him admirably. He had converted large sections of Richmond Park and of the Great Park at Windsor into farm land—he loved to see land that was producing, that was doing its job. He imported Merino sheep from Spain to cross-breed with native animals. Visits to the horse barn after dinner were an important part of the schedule at Windsor. The King even engaged in a public dispute on the best way to house chickens; under the name of Ralph Robinson, one of his shepherds, he sent technical

articles on the rotation of crops and other practical problems to Young's *Annals of Agriculture*. Much of the day was given over to hunting.

King George and Queen Charlotte served as models of domesticity. Their simple way of life had a strong appeal for the majority of their subjects, though some of the nobility and gentry thought them most unregal. Much of the time, the monarch went about in shoddy clothes. The table at the royal palaces was remarkably unpretentious, in keeping with the frugal tastes of the King and Queen. Until the Revolution, Benjamin Franklin was a great admirer of George III, which is not surprising, since he and the King had many simple virtues in common. "His dinner," wrote Franklin approvingly, "consisteth but of four dishes, dressed up plain, eateth temperately of them, and drinketh but a small quantity of weak Rhenish wine mixed with water. His supper is a crust of bread and a glass of water."

The King was not only a frugal eater, but he was generally a solitary diner. He had some of his meals with the other members of the family, but he and the Queen did not give dinner parties. When an occasional guest was invited, he was generally seated at another table. The Earl of Bute, Lord Sidmouth (Henry Addington) and the Archbishop of Canterbury were the only outsiders who dined tête-à-tête with his Majesty, and that was very rare. The only luxury in which the King permitted himself indulgence was fresh fruit, and he was, at times, apologetic for that.\*

King George followed this pattern of frugality throughout his life.† Though he was not a teetotaler, in an age of hard drinking he was extremely abstemious.‡ His sparing food and drink habits have been

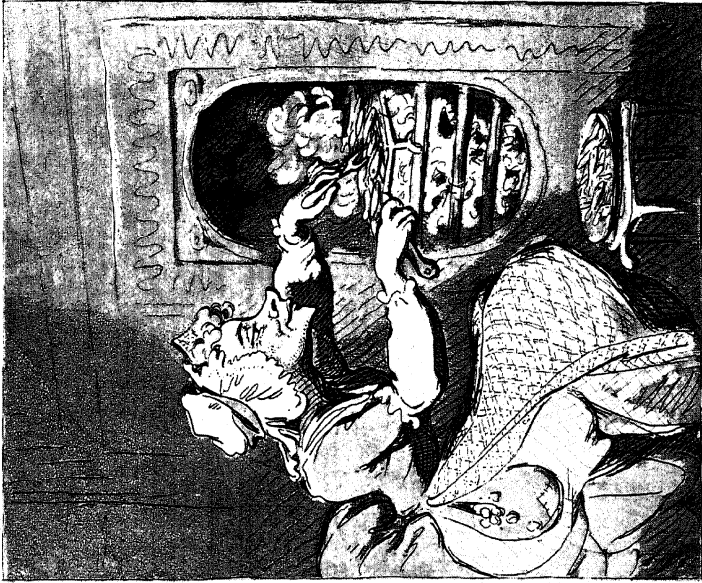
\*It would be hard to find a greater contrast to the eating habits of King George and Queen Charlotte than those of their son, George IV. He was famous as a gourmet and gave great numbers of lavish banquets. The menu of one that he gave as Regent, at Brightelmstone in 1817, has been preserved. At that repast his guests could order from more than a hundred prepared dishes. If his aged father had not then been completely insane, a look at that menu would no doubt have tended to make him so.

†Appendix.

‡In 1776 Chevalier D'Eon, the diplomatist, wrote to France describing this unusual King: "He never has any kind of supplies, but sends for six bottles of wine at a time and for one bottle of rum with which to brew punch, so that he is the laughing stock of all the city dealers, who are great feeders, heavy drinkers and whose jokes are as light as their roast beef. Numerous pamphlets and prints have been published on the subject, and the matter has been turned into jest on the stage."

In contrast to their King, the good men of the eighteenth century were great





Queen Charlotte, garbed as a domestic, is frying sprats, with coins spilling from her patched and bulging purse; George, in undress, is toasting the muffins for tea. These caricatures were published by Gillray in 1791



"TEMPERANCE ENJOYING A FRUGAL MEAL"

The details of parsimony in this caricature by James Gillray, published in 1792, are merciless. The Queen is stuffing greens into her copious mouth; the King is eating an egg in a chair crudely protected against soiling. On the wall are a table of interest-rates, "Parting of the Loaves and Fishes," a portrait of Epicurus, an empty frame entitled "The Triumph of Benevolence," and "The Fall of Manna" as gold. On the floor is a flagon marked Aqua Regis, and a money-chest topped by Doctor Cheyne's book *On the Benefits of a Spare Diet*. The hearth, surmounted by a squat figure warming its hands in a muff, has flowers instead of a fire; on the mantel are "Munificence" with empty horns, and a scale for weighing gold

traced to a deathbed warning delivered him by his Uncle Cumberland. Obesity ran in the family, Cumberland had said, and the only way to avoid it was to eat as little as possible. But self-denial and self-immolation were keystones of the monarch's character. He would stand barefoot on the cold floor at five in the morning, dressing himself for his strenuous day. When flour was dear, he insisted on eating potato bread. The King was an ascetic—he got satisfaction from disciplining himself. His parsimony had neurotic characteristics. It was penny-wise and pound-foolish, and it had its roots in self-denial.

His occasional extravagances were significant. In the early stage of an attack of manic excitement, in which extravagance is often a cardinal symptom, the King ordered from Beechey, the painter, some great gilded picture frames. When, on his recovery, they were delivered, he berated the artist for having taken advantage of him during his illness, pointing out that every one knew he was not the type of man to indulge himself so lavishly. Out of an income of more than a million pounds, he gave away only fourteen thousand pounds annually to charity.

George III was, in many ways, an odd mixture—variable, inconsistent, subject to rapidly changing moods. On one occasion he stood talking to Pitt for four long hours because his self-imposed code demanded strict formality in his relations with his ministers, and he could not countenance a King's servant sitting in the King's presence. Yet at other times he would so far forget his dignity as to appear suddenly at some great country seat near Windsor and embarrass his host by opening the doors and peering into the rooms as the party went through the hallways. At times he amused himself by practical jokes on his companions. He would go bounding up a flight of stairs to the rooms of his equerries and rout them out of bed at five in the morning for no purpose whatever. Greville records that in 1781, when he was accompanying the King on an inspection of the fleet,

tipplers as well as eaters. Even the rigid and self-controlled William Pitt was, during part of his life, a two-bottle man. The story that Lord Eldon delighted to tell of the old Oxford Doctor of Divinity who felt his way home by holding on to the circular railing surrounding the Bodleian Library and then complained bitterly of the length of his journey, is indicative of the times. Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles Darwin, belonged to a monthly dinner club styled "The Lunatics" because they always convened on the Monday night nearest the full moon. This was their custom because they felt that their horses could more easily find their ways home unassisted if the roads were illuminated by the moon. But to George III liquors were medicines and he used them very sparingly.

his Majesty called from his bunk so loudly that all the officers could hear, to know "what Lord Lothian did at night with his carefully arranged wig and his long thick pig tail." He played simple childish jokes on the members of his household. In the morning he would often rap noisily on the door of dear old Mrs. Delaney. Frightened, she would shout "Who's there?" In a high-pitched voice the King would sing back gleefully, "It's me." Sometimes, while riding, he would tickle the hindquarters of a particularly skittish horse on which one of his party was mounted; he would often stop in some isolated peasant hut, to talk volubly with its inhabitants and even taste the contents of the cooking pots. This interest, of course, did not escape the vigilance of Peter Pindar, who describes such an adventure in *The Apple-Dumplings and the King*.\*

As with many unstable individuals, George III's normal tempo was accelerated. He talked with amazing rapidity. "The oscillations of his body," noted a contemporary historian, "the precipitation of his questions, none of which, it was said, would wait for an answer, and the hurry of articulation, offered to little minds, or to malicious observers who only saw him in a drawing room, occasion for calling in question the soundness of his judgment or the strength of his faculties." Fanny Burney was warned before her initial interview with the King that she would probably be unable to understand his rapid staccatto speech. He seemed congenitally incapable of whispering or even of talking in a subdued tone. Outspoken to a fault, he was apparently unable to suppress anything; he went up to Lord Glenbervie at a Drawing Room and congratulated him on the recent death of his aunt, who, though the wife of the Bishop of Winchester, was a notorious gambler at cards. George often experienced a rush of ideas as precipitous as his words. In conversation, he tended to jump so rapidly from topic to topic that Pitt found that he accomplished more with his master by furnishing him with logically outlined memoranda than by talking with him.

His restlessness was coupled with an astounding physical energy. On hot days he would make dashes of forty to fifty miles on horseback, riding so hard that he sometimes killed his mount.

He had diffuse interests, rarely concentrating on anything long enough to give it more than superficial attention. He delighted in gazing through his astronomer Herschel's telescope, but he learned

\*Appendix.

nothing about astronomy. Mechanical devices of all kinds fascinated him. Freaks and wonders had an especial appeal. Along with crowds of fellow Londoners, he squinted through the microscopes of the great quack, Doctor Katterfelto, to see the large micro-organisms that he claimed to have discovered as the cause of an epidemic of influenza. Mrs. French, with horns growing from her head, made George's prominent eyes fairly bulge.

King George was very fond of music, and played the harpsichord, violin and flute.\* His favorite composer was Handel, and he delighted in telling how the great composer on discovering George's love for his music, declared: "That young man will preserve my music." The King maintained a genuine interest in architecture. In a letter written late in life to one of his daughters, he announced apologetically that he had changed his preference for Greek to Gothic architecture, "because the bad taste of the last forty years has so entirely corrupted the professors" of the former. George III also took a great interest in painting, and fancied himself as an able critic. Time has not confirmed his judgment; his favorite painter, and one to whom he gave commissions amounting to more than thirty-five thousand pounds, was the American-born Quaker, Benjamin West, a mediocrity whose best works now have little but historical value. The paintings of Reynolds, a professedly ardent Whig, were labelled by the King as "coarse and unfinished."

George III owned one of the great libraries of his age, not so much because he loved books as because he loved collecting. He accumulated 63,000 volumes at a cost of £135,000—he liked to spend his money for tangible things that would retain their full value. Showy items and unusual bargains delighted him.† There were frequent periods when he was too restless to keep his attention fixed on books, but he did read considerably, and most of his reading was devoted to religious subjects. He also read Gibbon, Fielding, contemporary drama, French political philosophy, and even some poetry. The chief basis for the misconception that George III was illiterate was his notorious pronouncement on Shakespeare to Fanny Burney. At a tea he suddenly exploded with the query, "Was there ever such stuff as a great part

\*When he played the flute he was often accompanied by Johann Christian Bach.

†Sir Walter Scott, however, considered George III a bibliophile, pointing out that he had one of the first copies of *The Book of Troy* to come off of Caxton's press, and that the King had himself done considerable research to establish its exact identity.

of Shakespeare? One must not say so! But what think you? What? Is there not sad stuff? What? . . . What?"\*

George III and Queen Charlotte made no pretensions to intellectual interests. At the theatre they preferred farce. Such novelties as the "Beggar's Opera," with the male characters in female garb and the women in men's attire, delighted them.

George was not devoid of a heavy sort of humor except in relation to himself; he took himself far too seriously to see the joke when it was on him. On looking at a list of the British Commanders in America, he remarked that, whatever the enemy might feel about such a list of names, they made him tremble. He once ordered something to be made by the famous mechanic and optician, Jesse Ramsden, who was notoriously unreliable in filling his contracts on time. When the article was finally delivered, George informed him that it was the right month but the wrong year. There were sitting on the Court of Exchequer at the same time Lord Chief Baron MacDonald, a great user of snuff, and Mr. Baron Graham, a great talker. His Majesty observed: "The Court of Exchequer has a snuff box at one end and a chatter box at the other."

Despite his petty vagaries and peculiarities, in the great responsibilities of kingship George generally had himself thoroughly in hand; he was competent and consistent. For all his abnormal conversational manner, he delivered his formal speeches from the throne impressively. He was not only persevering but abnormally stubborn as well. Even death did not soften his attitude toward Chatham, Nelson and Fox. And yet there were rare occasions when the King would change his mind and even admit that he had been wrong. Once when a military stratagem that he had opposed succeeded, he made a handsome public apology for his mistake in judgment. "In my opinion," he said, "when a person has been perfectly in the wrong, the most just and honorable thing for him to do is to acknowledge it publicly."

During the quarter century of their marriage, Queen Charlotte had proved herself an ideal wife. Coming to England as an adolescent girl fresh from a German Court, she naturally accepted her royal husband

\*It must be recalled that Shakespeare's stature was not recognized during the eighteenth century. Garrick was then in the process of reviving interest in him through doctored versions of his plays. Many men who had completed long years of residence at Oxford had not read his works. The King on another occasion expressed great admiration for the Historical plays.

as the autocratic ruler of the family. And she just as naturally accepted her role as the producer of royal offspring. She bore fifteen living children, twelve of them during her first fifteen years of marriage. Although many people thought she had as rigid a character as her husband, such was not the case.\* She was far from frivolous, but there was a lightness about her that George did not possess. This was displayed particularly in her letters to the King and the Prince of Wales. When her husband was away she often sent him messages from the children. "Octavius," she wrote on one occasion, "wishes much to be with his father aboard a horse but not aboard a ship."

The Prince of Wales, the family black sheep in her husband's opinion, was her favorite child; and there was an easy familiarity in her correspondence with him. One of her letters opened, "Oh! Stuffen Puffen indeed today, for it is even warmer than it was yesterday," and went on to ask the loan of his glass girandoles from Carlton House for a fete. She and her son at times exchanged recipes by mail. She even congratulated him when he was lucky in horse racing. Once when she sent him some political advice she graciously added that she was far less capable of understanding parliamentary affairs than of appreciating the beauty of the black lace cloak he had just sent her.

Charlotte's life as queen was not easy. She had subtly to adjust her pace to that of her unstable husband. She realized his vulnerability to mental upsets and in her quiet way tried to protect him. "You seem not to know the character of the Queen," Lord Chesterfield wrote his son. "Here it is—she is a good woman, a good wife, a tender mother and an unmeddling queen. The King loves her as a woman but I verily believe has never yet spoken one word to her about business."† In truth this was the wife for George III—a woman who met her obligations and whose every breath depended on the royal will.

The conjugal constancy of George III and his royal spouse was a

\*On Hastings' return from India, she allowed his wife, who had been divorced from Baron Imhoff, to attend Court. After all, Victoria would not permit a divorced woman to come to Court during her fifty years' reign. Indeed she even looked askance at a widow's remarrying. Queen Charlotte had a weakness for jewels and the fact that Hastings had made her lavish presents of rare gems may have played its part.

†That this is not an entirely accurate picture, so far as the Queen's participation in politics is concerned, is clear from a letter written by Humphrey Cotes to the Earl of Temple in 1765. In it Mr. Cotes attested to the Queen's "good sense and discernment" in their business, which had apparently had to do with the overthrow of the Rockingham administration.

favorite subject for satire. Of the English kings who ruled between Queen Anne and Queen Victoria, George III was the only one who took his marriage vows seriously. There was never even the faintest public suggestion of his being involved in a scandal of any kind, except during periods in which he was mentally disordered.

If the King and Queen served as models of marital fidelity, their conscientiousness as parents was even more exemplary. Among the Windsor Manuscripts is a record, kept for almost two years in the King's hand, of the bi-monthly height measurements, to one-sixteenth of an inch, of the two older Princes. When some of the children developed swollen cervical glands\* two houses at Windsor were appropriated to Sir John Pringle, the Physicians to the Person, and to Cæsar and Pennell Hawkins, Surgeons to the Person ". . . to watch the constitution of the Royal Children, to eradicate if possible, or at least to keep under the dreadful disease." According to a member of the household, the Queen herself saw the royal children ". . . bathed at six every morning, attended the school room of her daughters, was present at their dinner, and directed their attire, whenever these arrangements did not interfere with public duties, or any plans or wishes of the King, whom she neither contradicted nor kept waiting a moment. I may almost say, under any circumstances."

While the children were infants, George III derived great joy from them. He delighted in carrying them about in his arms; he found in these little helpless and utterly dependent beings the kind of uncomplicated personal relationship which he thoroughly enjoyed. Octavius, the eighth son, born in 1779, was his especial favorite. He was remarkably devoted to his father and, it is said, would burst into tears when his royal parent left him. Alfred, the youngest son, and the next to last child, died in the summer of 1782 at the age of two. He was the first of the children to go, and George was grief-stricken. He found consolation in Octavius, who was a year older, declaring: "I am very sorry for Alfred, but had it been Octavius I should have died too." Nine months later his darling Octavius died after having been inoculated for smallpox with the virus from a human case, by the surgeon Pennell Hawkins. The King's grief was intense, but no psychotic symptoms developed. He frequently broke down and moaned, "Heaven will be no heaven to me if my Octavius isn't there," but on the whole, he showed remarkable fortitude. Both the Queen and he

\*Scrofula was considered a taint of the Hanoverian House.



were solaced by their deep religious faith. To Hannah More, he observed, "Many people would regret that they had ever had so sweet a child since they were forced to part with him. This is not my case. I am thankful to God for having graciously allowed me to enjoy such a creature for four years." The King had a wax bust made of the child and sent copies of it to a few friends. A man of his intellectual conservatism and his orthodox religious beliefs must have had moments when he condemned himself for having permitted the scientific experiment of inoculation to be used upon his son.

Every step of the children's education at Windsor was supervised by their father. He insisted that "a proficiency in arithmetic should not be sacrificed to a knowledge of poetry." Among the Windsor archives are memoranda of what he wanted stressed in Religion, Latin, and Natural Science. He strongly advocated that amusements should be purposeful. The Princesses baked "dolls' bread" from wheat cultivated by the young Princes. While his three youngest sons were attending the University of Göttingen, George III supervised their courses and followed their progress with meticulous care.

George III was a strict parent who exacted implicit obedience from his children. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, on reaching puberty, were permitted to remain in bed until 7:30 in midwinter. At exactly 8 o'clock they had to report to a sub-preceptor for an hour's instruction before breakfast. Without a qualm the King sent his son William to sea at the age of thirteen.\* After Amelia had a bad fall from her horse, he ordered her either to remount immediately or be bled by a surgeon. As a matter of fact the frightened girl got back on her horse and after her return secretly consulted a surgeon. When Adolphus came home to convalesce from battle wounds, the King hurried him back into action as soon as possible. And on the Duke of Kent's return from Geneva without his permission, he commanded him to remain in his hotel room. After thirteen days, he granted him a five-minute audience and summarily shipped him off to distant Gibraltar. But there is no evidence that George was ever cruel to his children. The widely accepted story that he irascibly beat Augustus to stop an attack of asthma is hardly credible.

King George tried with strikingly poor success to make his children as religious as himself. When York left for his European education his father gave him a Bible with explicit directions to read it

\*Viscount Nelson had gone to sea at twelve.

every night and morning. When his older sons were approaching puberty he declared that he believed that "the only insentative [incentive] to rectitude" was "a belief in a Supreme Being and that we are to be rewarded or punished agreeably to the lives we lead . . . as to the fashionable word *honour* that never will alone guide a man farther than to preserve appearances." His letters to his children were generally sententious. He cautioned them about the temptations of adolescence, which he designated "the dangerous time of life." While Augustus was spending the winter of his eighteenth year in Nice to escape asthma, his father wrote him, "There is no greater wisdom than to economize amusements that they shall continue such during life, which if too much sought after naturally must sooner or later become irksome, besides if the mind be not constantly in the habit of serious employment it will lose its energy and those powers a man may have been blessed with will entirely vanish."

Parents who overplay their authority are likely to find their wishes flouted by their children, and George III was no exception to this rule. Much of the time there was resentment among them, and occasionally open rebellion. The King knew but one way to treat rebellion—discipline and then more discipline. His children grew up in an incredibly rigid atmosphere, in which piety and frugality were stressed ad nauseam.\* The Princesses, even after they were grown, were kept on a niggardly allowance and their social activities were so restricted that their lives were flat and dull. They deeply resented the fact that their father had a possessive attitude toward them so strong that none was permitted to marry until after she was thirty. The giving of presents was frowned upon and even newspapers were contraband in the royal quarters.

Naturally this type of almost morbid restriction led to periods of intolerable strain within the royal household. "I do not believe there is a more unhappy family in the Kingdom," wrote Sir James Bland Burges during one of these periods, "than that of our good King. They have lately passed whole hours together in tears, and often they do not meet for half a day, but each remains alone, separately brooding

\*A clue to understanding the amazing discrepancy between the profligacy of the royal brood and the virtuousness of their parents is to be found in Jung's dictum, that the suppressions of one generation result in the excesses of the next. This is a phenomenon that is generally familiar in the person of the proverbial preacher's son. Horace Walpole saw this when he proclaimed the dissolute ways of the royal Princes, "the fruits of being locked up in the Palace of Piety."

over their misfortunes. The ill-success and disgraces of the Duke of York, the wounds and ill-health of the Princes Ernest and Augustus, and the strange caprices and obstinacy of the Prince of Wales—all these causes are perpetually preying on them and making them miserable. The King sometimes bursts into tears, rises up and walks about the room, then kisses his daughters and thanks God for having given them to him to comfort him, by which the Princesses are variously agitated, and sometimes so much so as to go into fits.”

It fell to Queen Charlotte's lot to play the role of family peacemaker. She knew how quarrels with the children upset her royal husband and she realized how undesirable it was to have news of them get abroad. Much of the time she was engaged in stifling the breath of scandal that was constantly threatening to develop into a tornado. “I shall not fail to exert all in my power to alleviate your distress and prevent if possible a new Break in the family of which there have been full enough already,” she wrote on one occasion to her eldest son; and the same sentiment recurs with tragic frequency in her letters to her children.\* At the height of the quarrels between her husband and the Prince of Wales, the King would forbid her to have anything to do with their son. She would then write him surreptitiously, advising him on the steps he should take to regain paternal favor.

But during the years of political tranquillity that followed the firm establishment of Pitt's government there were also periods of calm and contentment within the royal household. The King and Queen went for weekly promenades with their children on the terrace at Windsor. When George and Charlotte attended the theatre the box was crowded with the royal children. They had long made a habit of having evening performances of various kinds at the Palace, to which a few intimates were invited. The great tragedienne, Sarah Siddons, gave readings from her famous roles. There were many musical evenings—sometimes the King and one or two of the royal children were among the performers. George was completely captivated by the child genius Mozart, who gave one of the evening concerts when he was only seven. The charming dwarf, Count Borwilaski, was a frequent attraction, along with the “Little Monmouthshire Fairy,” Miss Morgan, who was thirty-five years old and was said to weigh only eighteen pounds. Miss Ives, the famous spinner, who could produce

\*Appendix.

ninety-five miles of thread from a single pound of wool, entertained the royal family one evening with her skill.

Family stag-hunts, with the men on horseback and the women following in carriages, took place once a week. The royal children went on frequent excursions with their parents. Happy visits were made to Oxford; to Nuneham, the Harcourt estate on the Thames; and to Blenheim, the home of the Marlboroughs. The celebrations of the birthdays of the numerous members of the royal family were important functions.

The Prince of Wales was the only one of the children residing in England who held himself aloof from these family activities. Although the relationship of the King and the Prince was subject to great fluctuations it was never good after the Prince reached his majority. In truth, their difficulties had begun when the Prince was only seven. As long as the children were tender, malleable individuals, George III was happy in his relations with them.\* But Prince George's stubborn Hanoverian will developed precociously. George III was extremely punctual and hated to wait for anyone, but the Prince of Wales used to delight in appearing at dinner an hour late when the family planned to eat together.

On first learning of the Prince of Wales' dissipations, George III made a pathetic acknowledgment of his impotence in effectively dealing with his first-born, in a letter to his second son. He begged York to try to help keep his older brother on the straight and narrow path. In this letter he tells of the pain that he feels at having learned that Wales had been ill with "a most violent irruption. . . . He has undoubtedly both in eating and drinking been much too free . . . indeed his behaviour is not such as to gain credit with the world; a buck is a *mauvais ton* for a Young Gentleman. . . . He lends himself too much to the Duke of Cumberland who debases him. . . ."

Even before he was eighteen, the Prince had been involved in a scandalous affair that cost his father a lot of money. He had become enamoured of Mrs. Mary Robinson, the famous Perdita of David Garrick's version of "A Winter's Tale." The Prince sent her his miniature with the fervid but wholly inaccurate subscription "Je ne change qu'en mourant." What had proved to be far more expensive than the miniature, however, was the Prince's batch of love-letters, signed "Florizel," which the King had to retrieve for five thousand pounds.

\*Appendix.

This was only the first of a series of clashes between the King and the Prince of Wales over the latter's prodigal extravagance. Again, in 1786, the father's peace of mind was troubled by the Prince's exasperating demands to have his debts paid, which then amounted to £160,000. The Prince flatly refused to inform his father how £60,000 of the debt had been incurred. The King feared that some of this money had gone into the coffers of the Opposition party, of which the Prince was a leader. After the King refused pecuniary assistance, the Prince ostentatiously dismissed the greater part of his household in hope of gaining public sympathy and thereby forcing his father's hand.

In response to strong pressure from Pitt, George III permitted the House of Commons in 1787 to pay the Prince's debts and to increase his allowance. In the Royal Archives at Windsor Castle there is a special notebook that the King kept in his own hand, with correspondence relative to the Prince's debts. On the fly leaf, under date of January 18, 1787, the King wrote that he wanted this correspondence preserved to show the world, particularly Mr. Pitt and posterity, the justification for his actions. Pitt had a genuine personal antipathy toward the Prince, but he felt that the King's hope of forcing his son into acceptable modes of behavior was foolishly unrealistic. He favored the more lenient policy of periodically paying his debts for him. George finally acquiesced. Optimistically he looked ahead to a glorious period of family peace which, together with the political tranquillity under Pitt, would make his life perfect. Soon after his reconciliation with the Prince of Wales, George learned that his second son, the Duke of York, was about to return from his seven years' sojourn in Germany. He had been sent there for military training when he was only seventeen. As a child he had been a sweet-natured boy and his father's favorite, and the King was intensely excited in anticipation of his return. When the Duke bounded from his carriage in the Quadrangle at Windsor Castle, ". . . it was not pleasure that beamed in the King's eye, it was ecstasy." He had cause to rejoice, for the Duke proved to be a happy, modest, and unsophisticated young man.

But not for long. Prince George had also eagerly awaited York's arrival, and when news of it reached him, he travelled posthaste from Brighton to Windsor. The Duke was immediately fascinated by the self-assured and worldly manner of his elder brother and fell completely under his spell. The birthdays of the Prince of Wales on Au-

gust 12 and of the Duke of York on the 16th were gala days which all the family joined in celebrating. According to Fanny Burney, King George was in a constant "transport of delight."

The King's new-found domestic happiness did not last the year out. Early in 1788 the Prince openly lobbied against the government's India Declaratory Bill. A few months later he again electioneered in Westminster on behalf of the Opposition candidate. But far worse than that, the Duke of York, whom the King idolized, rapidly developed into as accomplished a roué as the Prince of Wales, his mentor. York became involved in an affair with the Countess of Tyrconnel, a lady of notoriously easy virtue. Together with his brother, he was the founder of Welzie's, a new gambling club. The two royal Princes were often seen in public, deep in their cups, acting the part of foolish wastrels. Together with Sir John Lade they staged races between ducks and geese and wagered heavily on them. And with Lord Barrymore's help, street races were organized at Brighton between females, the Princes of the Blood offering smocks as prizes. Just before Christmas, 1787, General Grenville, the head of the Duke of York's establishment, wrote, "We are totally guided by the Prince of Wales, and thoroughly initiated into all the extravagancies and debaucheries of this most virtuous metropolis. Our visits to Windsor are less frequent, and, I am afraid, will at last be totally given up."

Furthermore, at this time the King was having serious difficulties with William, his third son. William had gone into the Navy as a small boy. From the first he proved to be a difficult lad and, in consequence, the King was in constant communication with his superiors. To Admiral Hood he admitted, "William has ever been violent when contradicted." When he became of age he was put in command of the Frigate *Pegasus*, on duty in the West Indian Fleet, under Horatio Nelson. After Nelson was transferred, the stubborn young Prince, disliking his successor, disobeyed his orders and sailed away to Halifax. As a disciplinary measure he was commanded to winter at Quebec. This so exasperated him that he straightway took his ship to Plymouth, where he arrived early in 1788. The King notified him that he was to remain there in disgrace. The two elder sons, only too eager to embarrass their father, joined William during his period of supposed penitence and engaged in a round of balls and carnival fetes. The Sailor Prince lost his heart to the beautiful daughter of a merchant, and proposed marriage. The poor King decided that to lift his

disciplinary internment would prove the lesser of two evils, and ordered him away in command of the *Andromeda*.

King George's peace of mind was completely disrupted. The dissipations of his sons violated his moral code and profoundly upset him. He confided to his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, that on learning the details of one of the orgies in which his eldest son had been a participant, he had been unable to sleep for ten nights. And it would be hard to overestimate the hurt that he felt at having three of his sons joined in flagrant rebellion against him. It was indeed tragic. No father was more desirous of his children's affection, or could have tried harder, in a well-meaning and stubborn way, to secure it; yet few men have failed more miserably as parent. Some years later Lord Grenville described the children of George III and Queen Charlotte. "Good God," he exclaimed, "what a set they are. . . . We talked over the Royal family and we agreed that the three Kingdoms cannot furnish such a brood, so many and so bad, rogues, blackguards, fools and whores." Wellington's summary, in the virile and economical language of the soldier, is hardly more flattering. He pronounced them "the damnedest mill-stones that were ever hanged round the neck of any government."

## CHAPTER XIV



*"A crown, golden in show, is but a wreath of thorns."*

MILTON, "Paradise Regained"

DURING THE LAST MONTHS of 1688 and the first months of 1689 England was without a King. James had fled to France in the face of the great bloodless revolution and William had not yet come from Holland. By an odd turn of fate, exactly one century later England was again without a King. At the end of 1788 and the beginning of 1789 England had a ruler in name only, for George III was a madman. Instead of being seated on his throne, he was much of the time confined in a strait-jacket. George III was just fifty years of age when this catastrophe occurred. Although he had been abnormally unstable before, and had suffered short periods of mental morbidity, he had managed always to keep his hand on the helm. He did so even throughout his first definite mental illness, which occurred in 1765. But this second attack was far more severe. It lasted from the spring of 1788 to the spring of 1789, gradually increasing in intensity during a period of four months, when it reached a plateau of greatly heightened violence, which was maintained for another four months. Recovery and recuperation occupied the last third of the year.

The first symptoms of the attack must have seemed not particularly alarming. The King was worried and depressed, but even in periods of apparent health he was often morose. Now, however, his worrying took on an obsessive character; certain thoughts took hold of him—he could not get rid of them.\* He continually dwelt on the death of his beloved son Octavius, which had occurred five years before. He was possessed by the conviction that he should have married Lady Elizabeth Pembroke instead of Queen Charlotte. One of Handel's

\*Lord Melbourne told Queen Victoria that her grandfather's illness began with certain obsessions.



oratorios kept sounding in his ears until he "thought he would go crazy." He was disturbed by the impeachment proceedings against Warren Hastings.\* "Poor Hastings, poor Hastings," the King was overheard lamenting to one of his gardeners. "They'll ruin him, they'll ruin him! Poor Hastings, poor Hastings! he'll be ruined, he'll be ruined!"

At the onset of the illness, Lord Thurlow and the Duke of Leeds cautioned the King to take care of himself. "You then, too, my Lord Thurlow, forsake me," he said, "and suppose me ill beyond recovery; but whatever you and Mr. Pitt may think or feel, I that am born a Gentleman shall never lay my head on my last pillow in peace and quiet as long as I remember my American colonies." He could never forget the colonies. Shame and regret over their loss was a recurrent theme in the unhappy wanderings of his mind.†

Mrs. Papendiek, Assistant Keeper of the Wardrobe and Reader to Her Majesty, whose husband was one of the attendants who nursed the King throughout the illness, indicates in her journal that at the very beginning, the disorder was recognized by the family and the personal attendants as a mental disturbance. "This spring, 1788, the King began to show signs of serious illness," she wrote. "Dr. Baker alone attended him, and gave it as his opinion that the bile did not flow properly, and as his Majesty would not consent to take any medicine likely to be beneficial to him, he was up and down in his condition—better and worse, but did not rally. All eyes were upon him and party feelings ran high.

"At Easter the Royal Family were at Windsor as usual. Dr. Heberden, the Physician to the King was ordered down, and as his house was in Church Lane, and the garden wall adjoined the King's premises, a door was now opened through, so that he could have access to his Majesty at any moment. Dr. Heberden highly disapproved of Dr. Baker having so long ventured to attend alone, and at once summoned Dr. Munro. He considered the case alarming, and this peculiar practitioner said, 'there was quite enough for him to do, but there must be a regular consultation.'

\*The proceedings had been instituted in 1787. George III always considered Hastings' seven-years trial a Whig persecution.

†Although there is no evidence that George III suffered from obsessional thinking in periods of health, he was the rigid, superconscientious type in whom these might well have occurred. This inability to stop thinking continually about certain worrying topics is frequent at the onset of depressions.

"The great desire was to keep the circumstance secret as much as possible from the public, to hasten the session, and direct their hopes to the ease of summer business, to change of air, and other restoratives. The king was aware of the probability of his malady, but was unconscious of its having already made great strides. Dr. Munro retired, and was not again called in."

William Heberden, Senior, one of the greatest physicians of the century, was then at the height of his career. Samuel Johnson spoke of him as "*ultimus Romanorum*, the last of our great physicians." That he promptly sought the aid of Doctor James Munro, the outstanding practitioner in the field of mental diseases in England and the head of the great Bedlam Asylum, is proof positive that he recognized from the beginning that the King's illness was a mental disorder. George III's unwillingness to take medicine from Doctor Baker resulted from his deep-rooted distrust of drugs, and from the fact that Baker, although a man of unusual scientific ability, was a weak personality and was impotent in the face of royal stubbornness.

The earlier reports of the illness gave a confused picture. Not until November 5, when an article appeared in the press characterizing the King's disorder as mental, did the Court cease manufacturing reports of various baffling physical symptoms. They were attempting to do again what they had successfully accomplished during the short 1765 illness. Even the King's private letters to Pitt, who surely merited his confidence, masked the situation. "A pretty smart bilious attack prevents my coming this day to town," George III wrote from Kew on June 12. "I am certainly better than yesterday, and if it goes on mending this day, I shall hope to see Mr. Pitt in town tomorrow. Sir George Baker approves of what I have done, and I trust his advice will remove the remains of this complaint. On returning from the review I was forced to take to my bed, as the only tolerable posture I could find. To be sure, I am what one calls a cup too low, but when thoroughly cleared I hope to feel fully equal to any business that may occur."

The probability is that, abetted by the false interpretations of those about him, he was trying to delude himself into viewing his illness as primarily physical. Lady Harcourt, a personal attendant of the Queen during the 1788 illness, gives an interesting account of the King's dread of insanity in her diary of that period. He doubtless was fully aware of his own vulnerability to mental disease.

"It is remarkable," she wrote, "that in the former part of his life the King always laughed at the idea of nervous disorders, and I myself have often been the object of his pleasantry upon this subject. He generally concluded with saying, 'You may talk of them as you please, but the complaints you call nervous appear to me to be only a greater or lesser degree of insanity.' Of what really deserved that name, he had a greater horror than any person I have ever conversed with, and two years before his illness he had declined giving one of his daughters to the Prince of Denmark, on account of the king his father's situation; and I have known him almost express a wish for the death of persons for whom he has had regard, from the apprehension, that such a dreadful calamity was hereditary in the family."

The physicians urged the King to go to Cheltenham, a pleasant Gloucestershire town with salubrious springs. Lord Fauconberg vacated his rather modest house, Bay's Hill Lodge, and on July 12, the royal party, which was kept very small by the physicians' direction, set out from Windsor. The King and his chief medical adviser, Doctor Baker, were in frequent communication during the stay at Cheltenham. In his letter written from London on July 19, the physician gave some details of the prescribed regimen. "With respect to the quantity of Cheltenham water which is proper to be drunk," he wrote, "no one except the drinker can possibly determine it. It is, in general, experienced to be a weak purge. I by no means wished for a strong one; and I conceived, that, assisted by the pills a pint, drunk every morning, would act on your bowels sufficiently. However, I do not object to the quantity now taken, provided that the effect be not greater than at present and provided that neither headache nor sleepiness follow the use of it. . . .

"The influence of St. Swithin in the weather is now interrupted, and, in consequence Your Majesty will be more at liberty to extend your airings and pursue your favorite system of exercise. . . . During the use of Cheltenham waters, which in part is a cholagogue, strong exercise ought to be avoided for whatever brings fatigue will at the same time heat the constitution so that the water will become injurious rather than salutary."

The physicians wanted the King to stay away six weeks but he refused to make it more than five. Walpole states that they wished to provoke an attack of gout, ". . . which because of his Majesty's great abstemiousness is wanted, recommended to him to abate his violent ex-

ercise, and his very spare diet, by which he kept down the evil and to drink a little more wine." Walpole was sceptical of the role that gout played in the illness, having observed that on the few occasions when he had summoned physicians they had each time diagnosed gout, despite the great dissimilarity in symptoms that he had presented. He said the only superstition in which the King did not believe was that an attack of gout was healthful. In consequence, George III refused to increase his very temperate use of wine. He also declined to drink the Cheltenham waters on Sundays.

Lady Elizabeth Pembroke, the beautiful daughter of the Duke of Marlborough who had been married for more than twenty years to the Earl of Pembroke, was with the royal family at Cheltenham in her capacity as Lady of the Bedchamber to Queen Charlotte. Suddenly the King manifested a violent attachment for her. This display of affection was so totally out of character that it betrayed an abnormal mental condition, in which the King's powers of inhibition had been diminished.

Although before he went to Cheltenham, George III had been moody and depressed, there the pendulum swung in the other direction. Most of the time he was gay and exhilarated. "The King, however, has a flow of spirits at this time unequalled," Fanny Burney wrote in her diary during July. He behaved like a silly schoolboy, perpetrating all kinds of unregal pranks.

"He ran a race with a horse; and asked a Mr. Clements if he was the man who ran away with Lady S. Bunbery when he was in love with her . . . he would sit with young women who embroidered pretending to play on the fiddle." He did extravagant things such as having a house moved by thirty men from the town proper to Bay's Hill Lodge to afford comfortable sleeping quarters for the Duke of York during the one night that he slept there. Naturally a rapid eater, the speed with which he ate while at Cheltenham became amazing. "The King is so rapid in his meals," Fanny Burney wrote in her diary, "that whoever attends him must be rapid also or follow starving."

On August 5 the royal party began a five-day excursion from Cheltenham, part of which was spent at nearby Gloucester. "One morning, before anybody else was up the King walked about Gloucester town; pushed over Molly the housemaid with her pail, who was scrubbing the door steps; ran up stairs, woke all the equerries in their

bedrooms, and then trotted down to the bridge, where, by this time, a dozen of louts were assembled, 'What! is this Gloucester New Bridge?' asked our gracious monarch; and the people answered him, 'yes, your Majesty.' 'Why then, my boys,' said he, 'Let us have a huzzay.' After giving them which intellectual gratification, he went home to breakfast."\*

The King and his entourage left for Windsor on August 16. The leaders in Parliament were still obfuscated by frequent statements of the King's physical symptoms. Queen Charlotte, on the plea of not tiring her husband with the pressure of business, had kept his ministers from him and had prevented a widespread recognition of the true state of affairs. On September 19 the King wrote to Lord Sydney, one of his Secretaries of State, that he could not meet him at St. James's because of the pain in his face. The less gullible leaders realized that the real truth was being kept from them. Sir Gilbert Elliott noted that Burke had not learned ". . . what the complaint was for which he had gone to Cheltenham, a great deal of mystery and secrecy having been observed on the subject of this illness, which of itself shows it to have been somewhat serious, though it has concealed the nature of the disorder."

After the return from Cheltenham, the physicians ordered a complete rest, but the order was flagrantly disobeyed. On one day, for example, the royal patient stag-hunted for five hours and then attended a ball. According to Lady Harcourt's diary, the King had a skin rash on October 12.† Princess Elizabeth told the diarist that her father had shown her his arm and ". . . it looked very red, and in great weals, as if it had been scourged with cords." Apparently, he had a severe case of hives. On the 15th he ate his usual breakfast, a cup of coffee and a bit of dry biscuit; as was frequent on Levee days, he was too rushed to have dinner. In the evening, he went to the Hanoverian minister's, where he ate nothing but a few pears, and then returned to Kew. On the following morning, he walked in the gardens at Richmond and Kew, which were so wet with dew that water poured from his boots as he pulled them off while hurrying in his coach for London, late for the Drawing Room. That evening he is reported to have suffered from "spasms in his stomach and bowels" which gave

\*Quoted from Thackeray's *The Four Georges*.

†Even after coming to the throne, George III had had rather severe facial acne, an affection which generally clears up after puberty. But this was an entirely separate skin condition.

him most excruciating pain. On the 17th he was physicked with such violent effect that he had to be given laudanum as a counteractive. Doctor Baker seems to have engaged in a therapeutic juggling act. Within twenty-four hours he administered three doses of the purge and had to follow each with laudanum. It was reported that during this same period the King had several painful and swollen joints. A full-fledged attack of gout was hoped for, but the joints subsided. It is possible that these reports of physical symptoms were invented or, at least, exaggerated further to fool the public. However, Lady Harcourt's diary, the source of these details, was written as her own private record, and she was sufficiently intimate in the household to be the recipient of accurate information.

On October 19, Pitt wrote apologetically to the King, asking for a conference with him on foreign affairs. He said that he was ". . . almost afraid to mention this Circumstance at present, from fear that it may be inconvenient before Your Majesty is entirely recovered from the effects of your late indisposition." Realizing that his sovereign might not be well enough to see him and might prefer to state his opinions by letter, Pitt acquainted him with the Cabinet's views in regard to the international situation. They felt that "every Attention should be made to prevent a war—that an explanation with Spain and probably France, may tend to that object—that both Denmark and Russia should be distinctly apprised of Your Majesty having no other View but to preserve the Balance of Power in the North and to restore Peace on impartial and equitable Terms." He added that the government felt that the country should prepare for any emergency, but with as little alarm as possible.

The King's reply was sent on the 20th at 6:00 P.M. It begins, "I have not been able to answer Mr. Pitt's letter sooner this day having had a very indifferent night." It then enters into a discussion of international affairs, ". . . we must try," he wrote, "to save Sweden from becoming a province of Russia; but I do not think this object can be obtained only by a general war, to run the risk of ruining the finances of this country, which, if our pride will allow us to be quiet for a few years, will be in a situation to hold a language which does not become the having been driven out of America.

"To speak openly, it is not the being considerably weakened by illness but the feelings that never have day or night been at ease since this country took that disgraceful step, that has made me wish what

years I have still to reign not to be drawn into a war. I am now within a few days of twenty-eight years having been not on a bed of roses. I began with a successful war; the people grew tired of that, and called out for peace. Since that the most justifiable war any country ever waged—there in few campaigns, from being popular again peace was called for. After such woeful examples, I must be a second Don Quixote if I did not wish, if possible [to avoid] falling again into the same situation. The ardour of youth may not admire my calmness, but I think it fairer to speak out thus early than by silence be supposed to have changed my opinion if things should bear a more warlike appearance than I now expect, and if I should then object to a general war." The letter closes on a pathetic note: "I am afraid Mr. Pitt will perceive I am not quite in a situation to write at present, but I thought it better even to write as loosely as I have here than to let the box return without an answer to his letter." When George III was well he wrote vigorously and effectively. The muddled confusion in this letter is indicative of his abnormal mental state. The King recognized his condition but in spite of everything was valiantly struggling to carry on.

A strong dose of senna was administered by Doctor Baker on October 22. "This disordered him so much, that in the morning he sent for the physician to scold him, as he said, for having given him a medicine that always disagreed with him. His Majesty spoke with so much more warmth and displeasure than usual that Sir George was alarmed." When the physician returned to town at midnight, he despatched a note to Mr. Pitt. "Sir George Baker," he wrote, "is sorry to acquaint Mr. Pitt, that he has just left His Majesty in an Agitation of Spirits bordering on delerium." The young Prime Minister immediately dressed and arrived at Doctor Baker's house on Jermyn Street at two in the morning. A few hours after their conference was concluded, Sir George returned to Kew. Pitt, who had acquired a considerable knowledge of mental disease from his father's illness, had a prolonged audience with the King late in the day. General Harcourt also saw the King, who shrewdly observed to him, "... that Sir George Baker had mistaken his case, and that he seemed to follow no regular system in his management of him." The royal patient promised his physician that he would not go to the Levee on Friday, the 24th.

The city had been filled with rumors of the King's condition and the Stock Market showed definite signs of nervousness. Doctor Baker

perpetrated an unfortunate blunder that nearly created a financial panic. On the 23rd he sold £18,000 worth of stocks in order to take up an advantageous mortgage which had been offered him. The following morning he hurried to Kew in great distress, and confessed what he had done, informing the King that ". . . the funds had fallen 10 per cent, and he thought it his duty to make the circumstances known. His Majesty now thought it necessary to show himself in public, to quiet the fears of his people." In consequence, the King held a Levee at St. James's that afternoon. He made this effort, as he wrote Pitt, ". . . to stop further lies and any fall of stocks." At the Levee his manner and conversation caused the most painful uneasiness. He stayed but a short time and spoke to very few people. He seemed ill, and one observer noted that his skin looked "muddled, as if there was an eruption under it." In his letter to Pitt the following day, he informed him that he was going to Windsor to rest. "I am certainly weak and stiff," he wrote, "but no wonder. I am certain air and relaxation are the quickest restoratives." He informed the minister that he would not have any further conferences for five days, nor did he wish to have any State papers sent him.

Fanny Burney recorded in her diary, on October 25, that Sir George Baker was the only physician the King would admit. In the same entry she described symptoms that are characteristic of a manic disorder: "I had a sort of conference with his Majesty, or rather I was the object to whom he spoke, with a manner so uncommon, that a high fever alone could account for it; a rapidity, a hoarseness of voice, a volubility, an earnestness—a vehemence, rather—it startled me inexpressibly; yet with a graciousness exceeding even all I ever met with before—it was almost kindness: Heaven—Heaven preserve him! The Queen grows more and more uneasy. She alarms me sometimes for herself, at other times she has a sedateness that wonders me still more."

As the coach drew up to the door at Windsor Castle on the King's return from the Levee in London ". . . he saw his four youngest daughters waiting to receive him, and was so overcome he had an hysteric fit. His children and his attendants were all struck with the alteration in his looks; and he said to Colonel Goldsworthy, one of the equerries who had always had a great share of his favor and confidence, 'I return to you a poor old man, weak in body and mind.' From this time, however, October 25, he allowed that his disorder was nerv-



ous; it was attended by a considerable degree of bodily agitation, and a desire of talking that he was scarcely able to control. When his physician told him of it it increased his irritation, and hurt him essentially; at times he would desire those about him to check him, and propose that some one should read aloud to him to keep him quiet, but these means seldom obtained the desired effect."

He was now sleeping very poorly and, in consequence, was dissuaded from attending early prayers on Sunday, October 26. Later in the day he attended the services at Windsor Chapel. "Just before the Sermon began he started up, seemed to have lost all his power over himself, embraced the Queen and Princesses, and then burst into tears. The royal closet is so shut up that none but those within were witnesses of this scene. The King said to Princess Elizabeth, 'You know what it is to be nervous but was you ever as bad as this?' She answered, 'yes.'" In the evening he grew calmer and transacted some business with the Adjutant-General, Sir William Fawcett. For some days the King was permitted to ride horseback and to go out driving with his family. On Tuesday, the 28th, he visited Sir George Howard, remarking before he left that he ". . . should give me an account of the campaigns he made in Germany, and that will keep me from talking." The poor King talked much of death and insisted on making a new will in which the Prince of Wales was far less generously remembered than in earlier wills. He assured those about him that the misunderstandings which he had with his eldest son had nothing to do with this action.

Insomnia had now become very severe and it worried him greatly. Fanny Burney notes in her diary that on the night of October 31 the King had conducted the Queen to her dressing room before retiring to his own. "He was begging her not to speak to him when he got to his room that he might fall asleep, as he felt great want of that refreshment. He repeated this desire, I believe, at least a hundred times, though, far enough from needing it, the poor Queen never uttered one syllable! He then applied to me, saying he was really very well except in that one particular, that he could not sleep."

A consultation on November 2 between Sir George Baker and Doctor Heberden resulted in heroic therapeutic efforts; the King's head, which was kept shaved under his wig, was blistered. The rationale of the treatment was the drawing of noxious substances away from the brain to the skin surface. The King wore his wig over the blisters so that those about could not perceive what had been done. During this

period he was getting generous doses of quinine. He confessed to the Princess Royal and Princess Augusta that he felt guilty because he had not made matches for them. He said that the cause of this negligence was the pain he felt at the thought of their ever leaving him. He assured them that if he recovered he would go to Hanover in the summer and would make his court there as gay as possible in order to attract young German princes. In direct contrast to his accustomed punctuality, he now paid little attention to time. Dinner often waited from three until six and he could not be prevailed upon to go to bed before two in the morning.

On November 5, a news notice appeared in the *Morning Herald*, which greatly upset the royal family. "We learn that his Majesty's malady still continues, with disagreeable effects," it read; "from some of the symptoms it is said to have a tendency to the anasarca, but on this the Physicians do not decide peremptorily. The Bath waters are recommended by Sir George Baker, and others of the faculty, and in consequence, his Majesty will, it is thought, visit that place. Owing to the want of repose some slight derangements have been mentioned; but these have not excited much alarm."

It was to the concluding sentence that the Court took exception. The Queen ordered Fanny Burney to burn her copy of the paper and the Prince immediately dispatched a letter to his good friend, Richard Brinsley Sheridan. "A very indecent and improper paragraph having appeared in the *Morning Herald* of this date," he wrote, "respecting the State of the King's health, and as it has given the Queen, and every other individual of the Family, the greatest uneasiness I do insist, that you, in Person and To Night, go round, however, late, and in my Name, declare to the Editor of every paper that if they dare, ever to insinuate even, the most distant account of His Majesty's health, unless authorized to do so, I will prosecute with the utmost severity. You have my Authority to show this letter if necessary." Sheridan straightway executed the Prince's commands.

When Doctors Baker and Heberden visited their patient on November 5, he kept repeating in a rasping voice, "I am nervous, I am not ill, but I am nervous; if you would know what is the matter with me, I am nervous. But I love you both very well: if you would tell me truth: I love Doctor Heberden best, for he has not told me a lie: Sir George has told me a lie—a white lie, he says, but I hate a white lie! If you will tell me a lie, let it be a black lie!"

The condition of the royal patient continued to grow worse throughout the day of the 5th. "The bodily agitation had become extreme and the talking incessant," Fanny Burney recorded; "indeed it was too evident that His Majesty had no longer the least command over himself. His eyes, the Queen has since told me, she could compare to nothing but black currant jelly, the veins in his face were swelled, the sounds of his voice were dreadful, he often spoke till he was exhausted and the moment he would recover his breath began again, while the foam ran out of his mouth." That day at dinner, which was held in the late afternoon and was attended by the entire family, the King burst into a sudden wild excitement. He told the Duke of York he loved him so well that it was not in his power to refuse him anything. He assured the Prince of Wales that although he had been used very ill by him he would never injure him and would always love him. The Queen left the table and fainted when she reached her room. "The Prince was so much affected that he was almost convulsed and Princess Elizabeth was obligated to rub his temples with Hungary Water."

The King was greatly concerned over his wife's condition and sent for Doctor Baker, remarking, "He may prescribe if he will, but the Queen shall not be hurt as I have been by taking his medicines." The physician ordered a camphor julep for her and suggested that she and the King have separate bedrooms. Despite the Queen's exhausted state, George would not allow her to go to bed before midnight. He refused to sleep in his own room and insisted that a cot be put up for him in the Queen's second dressing-room, which was next to her bedroom. He was out of bed most of the night; in the early hours of the morning he wandered into the Queen's room with a lighted candle in his hand, pulled back the curtains of the bed and peered down at his wife. "I will confess the truth," he said earnestly, "I thought you had deceived me, and that you was not here." He talked steadily for a half hour, several times repeating, "They said the King was ill, he was not ill, but now the Queen is ill, he is ill too." He paced madly up and down the room and when he finally left, he slammed and locked the door behind him. The Queen immediately summoned Doctor Baker, ". . . but he excused himself, saying he was in so violent a perspiration he could not rise with safety." The Prince of Wales took matters into his own hands and sent for Doctor Richard Warren, who had been his physician. Warren had the largest fashionable prac-

tice in the metropolis but he was a man to whom the King had particular personal objection, probably because he was the doctor for nearly all of the great Whig houses.

The family awaited Doctor Warren's coming with great anxiety. When he finally arrived the patient refused to cooperate with him. "You may come here as an acquaintance," he declared, "but not as my physician, no man can serve two masters, you are the Prince of Wales' physician, you cannot be mine." Doctor Warren placed himself where he could listen unseen to the King's ceaseless, rambling talk. What he heard convinced him quickly. He lost no time in telling the Queen and the royal children that the patient was mad.

That night was again a bad one. The King slept brokenly from 2:00 to 7:00 A.M. At one o'clock he began wandering about and went into the apartment next to his, where the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, the physicians, and the gentlemen of the royal household were sitting in chairs or resting on sofas. Like an apparition, he suddenly loomed up before them. There was an awed hush as the white-clad figure made straight for the Duke of York and burst into tears. "Oh, my boy," he lamented, "I wish to God I might die, for I am going to be mad."

The gentlemen whispered to Sir George Baker that he should lead his patient back to bed. But as the physician approached, the insane monarch grabbed him by the throat and penned him in a corner. He gave Sir George a merciless tongue lashing, calling him an old woman and insisting that he knew nothing of nervous disorders. The Queen's Vice-Chamberlain, Colonel Stephen Digby, who was an old servant of their Majesties, rushed between them. He caught hold of the King's arm and, pleading with him, tried to drag him back to bed. The King planted his feet firmly and refused to take a step. He demanded to know who had taken hold of him so roughly. "I am Colonel Digby, Sir," said the Vice-Chamberlain quietly, "and your Majesty has been very good to me often; and I am going to be very good to you, for you must come to bed, Sir, it is necessary to your life."

With this admirable handling the patient yielded and got into bed.

## CHAPTER XV



*"Kings and bears often worry their keepers."*

POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC

THE KING'S LIFE is in danger. The seizures upon his brain are so violent that if he lives his intellect will not be restored." After Doctor Warren had made this grave pronouncement on November 7, 1788, the Prince of Wales assumed full charge of his father. A program of greater quiet was instituted. The Queen and the Princesses were ordered to distant quarters, and even the Gentlemen of the Household were forbidden to the sovereign. Immediately the Prince sent for the Chancellor, to obtain his permission to restrain the King in a strait-jacket should the need arise.

The patient had grown so violent that it was frequently necessary for four attendants to hold him down. Sometimes they had actually to sit on him—a procedure which must have encouraged the pages to forget their station; for, according to Lady Harcourt, "They behaved with a degree of familiarity and insolence that often irritated and essentially hurt His Majesty." For several days he slept an average of only two hours in twenty-four. His head was again blistered and on the 8th and 9th, doses of James' Powder, a famous antipyretic compound of antimony, were administered.\*

\*This medicine was patented in 1747 by the learned Doctor Robert James, writer of the well-known medical dictionary and a close friend of Johnson. Its use was greatly in vogue. Colley Cibber, Fielding, Cowper, and Gray were all enthusiastic devotees of the remedy. Horace Walpole, who was a therapeutic nihilist, said that he'd take it for any condition, even if his house were on fire. He wrote to the Reverend William Cole, "You may be well in a night if you will, by taking six grains of James' Powders. He can not cure death, but he can most complaints, that are not mortal or chronical. He could cure you so soon of colds, that he would cure you of another distemper, to which I doubt not you are a little subject, the fear of them." Oliver Goldsmith's death was generally ascribed to overdoses of James' Powder.

It seems to have been more widely recognized among medical men in the eighteenth century than it is today, that psychotic patients with fever have a better outlook for quick and complete recovery than those with no fever. Even the more intelligent laymen possessed this knowledge. Apparently, James' fever-reducing compound was given in this case largely as a therapeutic test. The fact that there was no abatement of the mental symptoms after taking the powders, even though the pulse dropped to between 70 and 80, was generally interpreted as ominous.

Although George Martine had published his classic *Essays and Observations* on thermometry in the first half of the eighteenth century, the clinical thermometer had not come into use by 1788. The rapidity of the pulse, the dryness of the tongue, and the warmth of the skin were the indices of fever. There are no records extant of temperature readings in this case and it is improbable that any were made. It is true that the King's Equerry, Robert Fulke Greville, records in his diary on February 17, "I have heard that yesterday the King had a degree of fever on him and which may have put him out of sorts." But this was probably an estimate arrived at by touching the skin. The term "fever" was loosely used and is the cause of considerable confusion. Greville wrote, in a letter in November, 1788, "There is some remission of fever, by which word they describe delirium."\* Sir Gilbert Elliott probably hit the nail on the head when he wrote, "The physicians, in the report they sent to St. James's talk of fever, but I am inclined to believe he has never yet had any fever, in the common acceptance of that word, and they must avail themselves of some occasional quickness of pulse to avoid the true name of his disorder, and also to avoid the declaration of a circumstance which would make his case much more hopeless—I mean that of delirium without fever."

On November 9, the King was uncontrollably violent for two hours. He thrashed about and fought until he was completely exhausted. Then he lay motionless for some time; his pulse was very feeble. Doctor Warren wrote the Prince of Wales that if an amendment did not take place in twenty-four hours, the King could not survive. To Jack Payne, the Comptroller of the Prince of Wales' household, Warren said that he would ". . . answer for his never living to be declared a lunatic."

\*In his *Dissertations on Fever*, Doctor George Fordyce said, ". . . that an increase in body temperature was not always present, but that the diagnosis was made by an estimate of symptoms and appearances."

On the order of the Privy Council, the Archbishop of Canterbury had a prayer read for the King's recovery in all of the Established Churches on November 16. He asked God to rid King George of the "visitation with which for the punishment of our transgressions, Thou hast seen it good to afflict him." On Lord Mayor's Day rumors were circulated in London that the King was dead and that Pitt was trying to keep the fact secret until the new Lord Mayor was installed.

Then for a few days there seemed to be some improvement. There was less agitation and physical violence; the pulse became slow, though the continual incoherent rambling persisted. The King dwelt on religion a great deal. The physicians were encouraged by the fact that he always addressed the German-speaking pages in German and the others in English. He often joked, and laughed uproariously at his own jokes. There were also moments of sorrow. On one occasion he picked up Octavius' picture and burst into tears as he addressed it. One of the pages mentioned to King George that the Prince of Wales had been in the room. "Yes," he said, "I know him very well and he cried to see me so ill. The Prince has at bottom a good heart; he has used me ill, but he is my child, he is still here [pointing to his heart]. I still love him." At another time he exclaimed that womanhood was safe—the Prince of Wales was dead.

The daily attendance of a Lord in Waiting at St. James's to answer inquiries regarding the King's health was begun on November 11. The first medical bulletin, prepared by Doctor Warren, was placed on a table in full view of all who cared to read it. "His Majesty has passed a quiet night," it read, "but without any abatement in his complaints." Hordes of the faithful made pilgrimages to St. James's to leave their names. The Duchess of Devonshire noted in her journal, "The Courtiers pretend it is nothing; and it is a fashion amongst them to say that they have been all mad: Lord Fauconberg declares everybody must remember his straight waistcoat; Mr. Robinson the same, and Lord Salisbury declares that the King has as much understanding as he has."

Then there followed a period of twenty-nine hours of complete sleeplessness. Strangely enough, this did not appear to affect the patient adversely. It was observed several times during the illness that a period of satisfactory sleep left him more violent than before. Sleep seemed to give him new energy, which he immediately expended in wild activity.

The diary of Colonel Greville, who was on duty with the King during the illness, not only records the content of the monarch's ramblings,

but gives us objective descriptions of his behavior as well. "Throughout the whole of this day," Greville noted on November 15, "H. M. has continued talking & incessantly on greater variety of Subjects than before, but does not dwell long on any, tho' He often comes back to the same— On whatever subject He talks He connects circumstances still with tolerable precision, as well as Situations— Mentioning Uxbridge this day, & He included Denham & that neighborhood accurately. He has spoke much this day of his recovery, observing (Poor Man) that he has been very ill, but that He is well now & says that He has been light headed— Among many directions which have occupied Him, He desired Col. Goldsworthy today to go to Eton to get the Boys a holiday on account of his recovery— To prepare the Queen for the firing of guns at 12 o'clock on the same occasion, & ordering the *Dettingen Te Deum* (Haendel) to be sung in Church, etc., etc.

"In the evening sensible (without prompting) that he was talking very fast, He altered & spoke in the third Person—'the King did so— The King Thinks so' etc. This correction he thus explained, 'I speak in the third person, as I am getting into Mr. Burke's eloquence saying too much on little things.' When Sir George Baker ordered him to do something that he resisted he said, 'That He should follow his prescription when He stood in need of it, but desired He would retire a little at present, as He must see He was nervous, & then turning to another he artfully said, 'You should talk to Me, for our poor Friend there (Dr. Baker) is too nervous at present.'"

Hydrotherapy, one of the therapeutic mainstays of modern psychiatry, was employed to promote sleep during the early morning hours of November 17. The patient was kept in a tub at 95 degrees for fifteen minutes and was then put to bed and read to. He liked the sedative bath so much that he asked his physicians to order it again. Doctor Henry Revell Reynolds began his attendance at this time and it is probable that he suggested the use of hydrotherapy. Doctor Reynolds was the only physician who attended the King in all of his subsequent psychotic attacks, those of 1801, 1804, and 1810. Sir Lucas Pepys was added to the medical staff immediately after Doctor Reynolds. He had been the physician to the Thrales, Samuel Johnson's dear friends, and, in consequence, was an intimate of Fanny Burney. George III was not friendly to Sir Lucas' attendance. "Who sent for you?" he demanded on the occasion of the first visit. "His Highness the Prince of Wales," was the rejoinder. "Then the Prince may pay you," said George



III, "for I won't pay post chaise." Sir Lucas' chief contribution to treatment was the application of "Carded Wool and Bootikins of Woolen Yarn to His Majesty's feet." His prognosis was optimistic and after his first visit he told Fanny Burney that he thought the King would recover completely. On the night of November 18 the patient talked incessantly from 1:00 A.M. to breakfast time. Later in the day Doctor Warren admonished him for his loquacity. "I know that as well as you," the King rejoined. "It is my complaint, cure me of that and I shall be well."

The addition of two doctors to the medical staff whetted the ambition of many other practitioners. The physicians to the King were constantly bombarded by suggestions of cures from all corners of the world. One advocated "communicating the Itch" to the Royal patient. Another recommended the ingestion of the blood of an ass, to which the brains of a ram were to be added. Most of the volunteers presented their claims through the agency of some courtier. Lady Harcourt received a letter from Lady Margaret Fordyce, informing her that Sir William Fordyce ". . . says that from all he has heard or read of the case, he sees no reason for despondency. He has seen many, who, from over-fatigue and low diet, have been in a situation similar to the King's, and who have perfectly recovered their faculties without ever suffering a relapse." The good wife then informs her friend that her doctor-husband had, in his early life, been a close friend of Doctor Battie, author of a well-known treatise on insanity, and had, therefore, always been much interested in such maladies. She also confided that her husband believed that the physicians already in attendance "consider that to be the cause which is only the effect."

A less modest volunteer was the famous Scotch empiric, James Graham. After his medical training at Edinburgh, he went to America, where he claimed to have studied electricity under Franklin and to have lived with the Indians to obtain their secret herbs. There he also practiced as a "philanthropic physician," specializing in the treatment of diseases of the eye and ear, but ". . . ready to administer relief in the most desperate diseases to patients whose cases had hitherto puzzled the ordinary practitioners." On his return to England, he founded the Temple of Health and Hymen on Pall Mall, where he exhibited as the Goddess of Health, Emma Lyon, later "the divine Lady Hamilton," and gave highly flavored lectures on propagation to the elite of London. The Temple's proudest possession was the

"Royal Celestial Electrical Bed of Patagonia," that guaranteed gigantic progeny of the desired sex to those conceiving on it. Lord Gordon, the mad instigator of the anti-Catholic riots, is said to have been one of those who paid fifty guineas for the use of the bed.\* Finally, the constables routed out the famous doctor and he turned his unusual talents to founding a new religion.

On November 24, just after the Prince of Wales had completed the review of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Graham dashed up to him and presented him with a letter which it had taken nine hours to compose, outlining the ideal treatment for King George. Of course the therapy recommended could be effectively administered only by James Graham, M.D., O.W.L. (Oh Wonderful Love). But the Prince was not interested. The doctor returned to Liverpool five days later, sadly convinced that he was not to be put in charge of the patient.

The superstition still existed in the eighteenth century that sufferers from a malady possessed peculiar skill in its treatment. Perhaps Doctor Graham considered himself especially well-equipped to handle the case because he had been a patient in the Insane Asylum in Edinburgh only three months before. Undoubtedly he was a crackpot, an ether addict, a charlatan; but he had ideas about psychiatry that were well ahead of his time. In *The General State of Medical and Chirurgical Practice*, which he published after his return from America, he wrote, "I often do wonders in the cures of the disorders of madness, by immersing the patient for several hours, perhaps daily, in a large tepid bath, while wet cloths or large ox bladders filled with ice are laid on his head. . . . While in the bath melodious sounds, vocal or instrumental or both, or rational pathetic conversation, and friendly expostulation pervade his whole system."

For more than twenty-five years George III had ruled over his people without ever having endeared himself to them. And now his affliction seemed to accomplish what his conscientious devotion to his office had never been able to do. The man on the street seemed drawn to him by bonds of sympathy and affection. Crowds used to stop the carriages of the physicians, on their way from seeing the King, and demand first-hand reports. If these reports were unfavorable, the doc-

\*The Temple also possessed a complex electrical apparatus with which all sorts of afflictions were treated. Little Walter Scott had it used on a withered limb which had apparently resulted from infantile paralysis.

tors were sped on their way with shouts of "the worse shame for you."

On November 18, the patient talked for nineteen consecutive hours without ceasing, and then, after two hours of sleep, began again. The attending physicians decided to remove all possible stimulation from the King. Only two pages at a time were allowed in his bedroom, the equerries had to remain in an outer room, and visitors were almost entirely excluded. Medication consisted chiefly of opiates, followed by laxatives to counteract their constipating properties.

Then the doctors tried an heroic experiment. They allowed the King's daughters to promenade in the garden in full view of their father. George III was greatly excited by the sight of them. He ran to the windows, which were screwed down, and tried to break them open. Failing in this attempt, he called and screamed until Princess Elizabeth almost fainted and "all of them seemed more dead than alive when they got in the house." The experiment could hardly have been called a success.

Greville records that on November 22 the King had a very quiet period. He confided to him and to General Bude that during his recent period of intense excitement he thought there had been a great deluge, that he had seen Hanover through Herschel's telescope and that he had thought himself to be inspired. On the 23rd he was worse and began to talk very obscenely, a thing that was quite foreign to him when well. Enraged at one of Doctor Warren's orders, he attacked him and was prevented from hurting him by the interference of the equerries. At times he struck the pages when they told him that his commands were contrary to the orders of the physicians. After these attacks, he was occasionally remorseful; but his dominant mood was one of high good humor, and much of the time he laughed uproariously.

William Pitt and the Chancellor had a long consultation with the physicians at Windsor on the 25th. They were dissatisfied with the way things were going and they suggested that a practitioner who had had special experience and skill in psychiatry should be summoned. On November 27, Doctor Anthony Addington was called into consultation. He had conducted a "madhouse" in Reading from 1749 to 1754, prior to carrying on a general practice in London, but for ten years had retired from practice altogether. He had been Chatham's physician and was so close to him personally that he was known as

"the political doctor." George III thought Pitt alone responsible for having called Doctor Addington on his case and held it against him for some time.

At his first visit, Doctor Addington and the other physicians "... listened to his Majesty's talk from the side room, to see if they could gain a clue to any subject that might be especially worrying the King's mind; he talked incessantly, till his poor voice was quite hoarse and painful to listen to. . . . He spoke of the general conduct of the Prince of Wales, fearing that his brothers, with the exception of Adolphus, were following him; of his little Octavius who had been his companion, his comfort, his delight, adding that the Almighty had taken him. He hoped that he was resigned to His will, but he must be very sinful to be so sorely chastened; and then the tears rolled down his cheeks in a manner pitiful to behold." Doctor Addington made one serious blunder in treating his royal patient. King George asked the physician if he might see the Queen, and Addington assured him that he might. This was contrary to the advice of all the physicians on the case, and the permission had to be withdrawn because of their protests. Apparently Doctor Addington proved unsatisfactory, for he was called in consultation only a few times.

The King's removal from Windsor to Kew, which had been considered for a week, was arranged for November 29. The chief reason for the change was that at Kew he could be isolated from morbid intruders; there he could be out of doors even when he was quite disturbed. A second important consideration was that Kew, being much nearer London, was more accessible for the physicians and ministers. The change was strongly advocated by the Prince of Wales and opposed by the Queen, who felt that it would be contrary to her husband's wishes. She yielded after she learned that it had the unanimous endorsement of the physicians and after she had exacted promises that force would not be employed, nor her husband deluded into believing that she had been the prime mover behind the change. At ten in the morning, the Queen was sent on ahead with the Princesses, in the hope that the King would follow willingly. Pitt was selected to inform him of the proposed transfer because it was thought that the King had confidence in Pitt and would believe his statement that the Queen and their daughters had already gone to Kew. The patient tried to make difficult bargains. He refused to go to Kew unless the Queen returned first and begged his pardon for having left him,

and then accompanied him on the trip. After Pitt's unsuccessful efforts, George's favorite equerries pleaded with him, but in vain. Finally a squad of four of his physicians advanced on him. He became wild and leaped out of bed at Doctor Warren. After he was somewhat quieted he asked whether they intended to move him by force. If he persisted in his behavior, they said, they would have to use force. He then promised to dress if the doctors would leave the room.

After many delays, during one of which he sent for Sir George Baker to consult him as a "friend and not as a physician," he was brought into his carriage. According to Colonel Greville, who was one of the three equerries who rode with him, tears came into his eyes as they went through Windsor and he saw a group of sad-faced tradesmen respectfully saluting. "These good people are too fond of me," he remarked. "Why am I taken from a place I like best in the world?" he asked sorrowfully; but then his mood changed, and he had frequent fits of laughing. He talked without ceasing, the topics and the manner marking his derangement only too plainly. He paid little attention to the countryside but the places he named were accurately identified. As they passed through Brentford a drunken man shouted at them, and misinterpreting the incident, the King remarked that he had often been hissed as he passed through that town. On his arrival at Kew after dark, he became very excited. He refused to go to bed, having resolved to sit up and tire out his attendants. To demonstrate his strength, he danced and hopped about with astonishing and very unregal agility. In order to coerce him into making the trip to Kew, General Harcourt had carelessly assured him that he would see the Queen after he reached Kew. When this was not permitted during the evening he felt that he had been tricked and became combative. It was not possible to get him into bed before four in the morning.

For some weeks prior to Georges III's transfer to Kew, the Prince of Wales was in full charge of details for the patient's care. The Queen remained in complete retirement, weeping and praying much of the time. The Prince had made all of the preparations for the residence at Kew, chalking on the lintel of each door the name of the room's occupant. The official orders and bulletins were signed by him and his brother, York, during the early part of the illness. The Comptroller of the Prince of Wales' household, Captain Jack W. Payne, went to

reside with the Prince at Kew on November 10. He was an active and ambitious petty Whig politician and he began to sketch for the Prince magnificent vistas of the promised land that the monarch's disorder should procure for him and the hungry Whigs. By November 17, it had already been rumored that the Prince of Wales had become engaged in intrigue to detach the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, from the Court Party. A few days later, the Prince introduced Lord Lothian, a political confrère, into the darkened sickroom, so that he could hear the King's ravings at their worst.

## CHAPTER XVI



*"When I forget my Sovereign, may God forget me."*

LORD THURLOW

CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL REPORTS sent to Pitt and the other government leaders were so unfavorable that early in November they resigned themselves to the necessity of forming a Regency. Despite bitter misgivings, they were pretty well reconciled to the fact that the Prince of Wales, being of age, would have to serve as Regent. The problem in political strategy was—how impotent could he be made by the restrictions which Parliament might be induced to place upon him? Pitt had some hope that, with his great Parliamentary majority, the restrictions might be made so severe that the Prince would refuse to accept the Regency. As a matter of fact, for a short period this became the Prince's professed attitude.

Then the Queen entered the controversy as an active force. The Prince of Wales had in earlier years been her favorite child, but his cynical disloyalty to his afflicted father had turned her against him. She knew her first-born to be a master bluffer, and now she intimated that if he rejected the post of Regent, she would feel herself forced to accept it. The Prince of Wales and his devoted brother York were furious. The gauntlet was thrown down; the War of the Regency was on! The Queen gave up her retirement and became, in the combat with the forces of Fox and the Prince of Wales, Commander of the Home Guards on Pitt's staff. Even the physicians joined the warring factions.

Parliament had been prorogued for November 20. It met with an unprecedented first-day attendance of four hundred and fifty members and immediately adjourned until December 4. Rarely in English history has there been a period of such frenzied political activity as that intervening fortnight. It was as if a forest had been struck by

lightning and burst suddenly into flames. Rumors and lies were circulated by both the Court Party and the Whigs, with the same conscienceless abandon. There were scandalous articles in the newspapers. One of the Whig journals took up the rumor that Pitt and Queen Charlotte planned to run the government jointly during the King's incapacity. "The suggestions from a certain obstinate Minister of State," read the scathing comment, "cannot but add to the distress with which it may be presumed the Queen is already involved. . . . We can assure the public that some very extraordinary motive for the Conduct of a Certain Lady will be laid before them, unless she recedes from the present plan; and tho' the love of Diamonds may be forgiven on the score of female frailty, there are things that can not be excused." In Parliament, Pitt was accused of opposing the Prince of Wales' claims to the office of Regent because he had "been so long in possession of power, that he could not endure to part with it."

The Prince and William Pitt made no secret of their distrust and dislike of each other. All the ministers under Pitt knew that if the Prince of Wales became Regent, they would immediately lose their places. So the government forces resorted to the same type of low political trickery that the Whigs employed. A maliciously clever handbill, directed against the Whig leader Burke, was widely circulated in the city. "The Rt. Hon. Edmund Burke," it read, "had last night three hours sleep: he is calm this morning, but tending toward unquietness."

The Whigs, however, were undaunted by such aspersions. The illness of their sovereign was a great stroke of luck from their point of view. Before King George III had become incapacitated, Pitt had been growing stronger each year, and the possibility of the Whigs coming into power had grown steadily more remote. Now, overnight, the picture had changed. If the Prince of Wales could be appointed Regent, the Whigs could take over the government.

There was one serious weakness in the Whig position. Charles Fox, their great leader, was away, vacationing on the continent with his mistress, Mrs. Armistead; no one knew his whereabouts. It was typical of the man that when he went on a vacation he cut all ties with England. From September to November, he had not had a single letter, although the post went twice a week to the Continent. For two months he had avoided looking at newspapers but had weakened on one occasion to look at the racing results at Newmarket.



The Duke of Portland dispatched a messenger in quest of him on November 6, who came up with him at Bologna on the 15th. Fox immediately set out for London, leaving Mrs. Armistead at Lyons to follow at a more comfortable pace. Nine days later, on November 24, at six in the morning, he alighted from the coach at Thomas' Inn, Berkeley Square. While making the dash through Europe he had contracted dysentery, and arrived in London sick and emaciated. He gamely threw himself into the contest as soon as he was bled and had had a few hours' sleep. On the 25th, he dined at the Duke of Portland's in company with Sheridan, Lord Loughborough, General Burgoyne, the Duke of Devonshire, and Sir Gilbert Elliott. The following day he had a long meeting with the Prince of Wales.

Much that had occurred in his absence he disapproved of. A shameless political flirtation had commenced a week before his return between the Prince and the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow. Next to Pitt, Thurlow was the most important member of the Cabinet. His approval of any political action would place upon it a surplice of legal sanctity that would make it very difficult to attack. Although Thurlow and Pitt had worked together for more than five years, they hated each other. No doubt the Chancellor was as anxious to enjoy the satisfaction of badgering Pitt as he was desirous of retaining a life tenure of his office, which he had already held through the Ministries of North, Rockingham, and Shelburne. Thurlow had a commanding personality. He was not a great lawyer nor an eloquent speaker, and the versifying to which he was addicted was notoriously bad. Nonetheless, some magnetic force made him a man to be reckoned with. He presented an awesome appearance, with beetling black brows and a great beak of a nose. At this time many of the important lawyers lived the bachelor life of the Inns. On being elevated to the bench, they customarily gave up their mistresses and married, completely blotting out the past. Not so with Thurlow—he took his illegitimate daughter with him wherever he went. He affected a bluster and a rugged frankness which concealed his artful treachery.

Thurlow's perfidy became commonly known by a chance occurrence when he attended a Cabinet council at Windsor. He had arrived ahead of his colleagues. When he was ready to leave, his hat could not be found. Finally a page produced it, announcing that it had been discovered in the closet of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

Lord Thurlow had privately informed the Whig leaders that before he would come out for an unrestricted Regency for the Prince of Wales he would have to have their promise that he would be kept on the Woolsack. But Fox had promised Lord Loughborough the Lord Chancellorship. Loughborough was a more brilliant lawyer and speaker than Thurlow, though his sense of honor was no more highly developed. The leaders tried desperately to make a deal with Thurlow. He was to renounce the Chancellorship in favor of Loughborough and in exchange to receive the Presidency of the Council together with other honors and pensions. He would not yield. Finally Fox had to give in to Thurlow. "I have swallowed the pill"—Fox wrote to his friend Sheridan, "a most bitter one it was—and have written to Lord Loughborough, whose answer must be consent. What is to be done next? Should the Prince himself, you or I, or Warren be the person to speak to the Chancellor? Pray tell me what is to be done? I do not remember ever feeling so uneasy about any political thing I ever did in my life. Call if you can." This note shows the extent to which Doctor Richard Warren, the King's physician, was participating in Whig politics. Lady Harcourt states that on November 28, "... the Chancellor was with the Prince of Wales one and a half hours after the Cabinet meeting. They, with the Duke and Dr. Warren, drank a good deal of wine, and then, with the exception of the Chancellor, returned to the company in the other room, saying he was a 'glorious jolly dog.'"

By the time Parliament reconvened on December 4 it was evident that the King's removal from Windsor to Kew six days before had not improved his condition. In fact, his violence toward his attendants had greatly increased. He pulled one about by the hair, and kicked another. On one occasion a page lost his temper and struck the royal patient. King George became infuriated and in the fight which ensued seriously injured the attendant. On December 3, the poor monarch had plotted an escape. He tried to get his equerry, Robert Greville, to take him into Kew Garden alone, where he planned to throw *Arquebusade Water*, a strong liniment, into Greville's eyes. But his shabby little plot was discovered, and again he was thwarted.

Much of the time he refused to eat and would take no medicine. "Since His Majesty has been at Kew the unfavorable Symptoms of his

disorder have increased, rather than diminished," the Greville Diary notes on December 1, "and in his conversation, Oaths which had never yet been heard from his lips, were now for the first time, blended not infrequently, with indecencies." Moments of quite profound depression interrupted hours of hilariousness. "He even gave hints of being tired of his Existence and actually entreated his Pages to dispatch Him. . . . At times He was mischievously Jocose & at which times He burnt two Wigs belonging to one of his Pages—At another he was childishly playful, begging romps & making his Pages wheel Him about the room. At night he became almost unmanageable, and during the Night He was obliged to be kept in his bed."

The diarist's account of his condition on December 4, the day that Parliament reopened, was far from encouraging: "This Morning having passed a bad Night & with very little Sleep, appeared by no means better. He refused to get up and on being pressed He defended Himself by gathering up his feet and then darting Them forward with Violence agst. those who pressed on Him."

When the House of Lords convened, a report of the testimony of the physicians attending the King, given before the Privy Council on the preceding day, was read by the President of the Council. The examination had been limited to three or four rather general questions, which were read to the physicians. This limitation was designed ". . . to avoid what was called the indelicacy of inquiring into the particular acts committed by the King." The physicians were unanimous in declaring the King incapacitated for business. They also agreed ". . . that there was a great probability of his recovery, but that it was impossible to limit the time." A similar report was presented before the House of Commons by Pitt. Noisy outbursts of partisanship interrupted the reading of the report in this less august body. When Doctor Pepys' testimony was read stating the favorable prognostic importance of the King's negative family history, one of the Opposition leaped on a bench and, facing the House, made the gesture of cutting his throat. This pantomime referred to the rumor that a maternal uncle of the King had committed suicide.\* A committee of

\*Suicide in the eighteenth century was thought usually to be due to insanity. Doctor George Cheyne in his "English Malady or a Treatise of Nervous Diseases of all kinds" talks of "the late Frequency and daily Encrease of wanton and uncommon Self-murderers, produced mostly by this Distemper." In 1774, when the great general, Lord Clive, then only forty-nine years old, committed suicide following the House's rejection of the resolution to censure his conduct in India, the common opinion was that he was insane.

twenty-one was then appointed by each House of Parliament to examine his Majesty's physicians on December 8 and 9 and render a report of their several opinions.

Between December 4 and 8 two additions were made to the staff of attending physicians. On the 4th Doctor Thomas Gisborne first saw the King and on the 5th the Reverend Francis Willis began his attendance. Not only Doctor Willis himself but two of his sons and a group of attendants, trained by him at the private asylum which he conducted in Lincolnshire, became actively engaged in the care of the King. In fact, members of the Willis family were periodically to supervise George III's mental health for the remaining thirty years of his life. Doctor Francis Willis, who, from the first, was superbly optimistic of his sovereign's recovery, immediately became a strong ally of Pitt and the Queen, in opposition to the pessimistic Doctor Warren, who bolstered up the dark hopes of Fox and the Prince of Wales. Sir George Baker was at first also strongly counted upon by the Whigs to be partial to their interests. But he seems to have been overwhelmed by the serious medical and political aspects of the case. Captain Payne wrote to Sheridan, "Warren is the living principle in this business; for poor Baker is half crazed."

Willis and Warren presented a marked contrast in character and training. They both began medical practice in the first year of George III's reign. Doctor Richard Warren was the prototype of the flourishing practitioner. He was a member of Samuel Johnson's and Edmund Burke's Literary Club, and he had an enormous and wealthy practice. Every day his sedan chair could be seen before the mansions of the nobility, particularly the Whig aristocracy, and before the more modest abodes of the leading artists and actors. To them he was very generous, as he could well afford to be. In her *Memoirs*, the actress Elizabeth Simpson Inchbald pays great tribute to Doctor Warren, who climbed up to her little room on Frith Street to take care of her during her illness in 1790, when she was the toast of the town. After she was convalescent he would stop to bring her a game or some fruit. She admits that she developed such love for her doctor that she found herself ". . . walking up and down Sackville Street, where he lived, watching whether there were lights in his apartments and following his carriage about town." Lady Harcourt, who was necessarily prejudiced against Warren, said of him, "To his female patients he recommended himself by assuring them their health depended greatly

on their spirits; he therefore seldom objected to dissipation in winter, and often found the water drinking places they best liked absolutely necessary for them in summer." She also stated that he gained the favor of many persons of consequence by lending them money from his immense professional income. Doctor Warren made no scientific contributions to medicine and devoted no time to teaching. The story is told of him that he was so pre-eminently a private practitioner that when he looked at his own tongue in the mirror he transferred a guinea from one pocket to another.

Doctor Francis Willis was not a regularly trained physician. The son of a vicar of Lincoln Cathedral, he had trained in the Church to please his father and had served as the rector of St. John's Church, Wapping. While taking his holy orders he had also attended medical lectures at Oxford. When he was forty-two he received the degree of Bachelor of Medicine from Oxford University and opened a private asylum for mental disorders at Gretford.\* Doctor Willis was a large handsome man with a piercing eye, who gave the impression of possessing unlimited confidence in himself. He had had nearly eight hundred patients in his house at Gretford during his quarter of a century of practice. None of them had paid less than four guineas and some of them had paid as much as fifty guineas a week. For some years he had had an income of about £6000 a year from his practice.

Doctor Willis's attendance on the King was the result of a recommendation by General Harcourt's wife, who had drawn up a testimonial describing how Willis had cured her mother of a nervous disorder. The testimonial having been presented to Mr. Pitt, the minister met with Chancellor Thurlow, the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of York, and they decided to summon Willis. The Queen was opposed; such a step, she felt, would immediately brand the King as a madman before the world. But she had to give in, and a despatch was sent to Gretford. Doctor Willis, characteristically, was in no hurry to heed the summons. He stayed at home for several days setting his affairs in order, and did not arrive at Kew until December 5.

As he entered George III's chamber for the first time, the King turned to him. "Sir," he said, "your dress and appearance bespeaks

\*Even Oxford conferred medical degrees on the slightest pretext in exceptional cases. Its regulations, that one had to be in residence ten years and explain a whole book of Galen in Latin in six extemporaneous or three written lectures to get a medical degree, were often waived.

you of the Church, do you belong to it?" "I did formerly," replied Willis, "but lately I have attended chiefly to physick." "I am sorry for it," answered the King with emotion, "you have quitted a profession I have always loved, and you have embraced one I most heartily detest. Alter your line of life, ask what preferment you wish and make me your friend—I recommend you [the parish of] Worcester." But Doctor Willis answered his sovereign firmly. "Our Saviour Himself," he said, "went about healing the sick." "Yes," answered George III, "but he did not get £700 a year for it."

Later in the day, the King told one of his pages that ". . . as Doctor Willis was come He could never more show his face again in this Country, that he would leave it for Ever, & retire to Hanover." When Doctor Willis returned to him, he complained much in the same vein. The physician told him frankly that his ideas were deranged and he stood in need of treatment and management. "Now you have checkmated me," said the King gloomily.

From the first Doctor Willis showed skill in handling his patient. He employed a combination of leniency and firmness for which he was deservedly renowned. In the former respect, his methods were a striking departure from the common practice. When, on December 2, the Duchess of Devonshire learned that Willis had been called to treat the King, she made an informative entry in her diary. "They talk of entrusting the King to a Doctor Willis, a clergyman," she wrote, "who is used to the care of Madmen and treats them with kindness, even keeping a pack of hounds for them and allowing them to hunt and shoot." He brought with him a strait-waistcoat, a type of strait jacket, which he showed his patient soon after his arrival, warning him that he would be forced to use it if George did not calm himself. Yet, at the same time, he permitted the King to use a knife and fork in feeding himself, and even allowed him to shave himself. He said later that he did not consider suicide a danger, particularly since the King was so deeply religious. He discontinued the large doses of laudanum which were being given at night for sleeplessness, and it was found that the patient slept as well without the drug as with it. He made it plain to the King that while treating him he would cast aside the roles of subject and sovereign, and substitute those of physician and patient. "I am extremely struck with both these physicians," Fanny Burney wrote after the Willises had been in attendance a short time. "Doctor Willis is a man of ten thousand; open,

honest, dauntless, light hearted, innocent, and high minded; I see him impressed with the most animated reverence and affection for his royal patient; but it is wholly for his character—not a whit for his rank. . . . The manners of both are extremely pleasing, and they both proceed completely their own way, not merely unacquainted with court etiquette, but wholly, and most artlessly, unambitious to form such an acquaintance.”

Despite the fact that the King was much agitated on the day that Willis first examined him, the clerical doctor vigorously asserted that the King would recover, and would be in better mental health than he had ever been before. The Whigs immediately recognized that “Doctor Duplicate,” as he was frequently called because of his two professions, would be a powerful bulwark for their political antagonists. The day after his arrival the Duchess of Devonshire, who was in her own right an important Whig leader, wrote, “With regard to Doctor Willis, he certainly has been talking to Charles Monson and others of the probability of Restoring the King but he is a boasting sanguine man and violently with the administration—however, it was necessary to manage him before our plan of operation was laid, and Sheridan has been tonight with Warren, who answers for it that Willis’ account will tomorrow coincide with theirs. The King wanted Sir George Baker to have the waistcoat on, and calls Warren ‘Sir Richard Rascal.’”

Doctor Willis was the first physician to be called to testify before the House of Lords Committee on December 8. He was somewhat guarded as to the prognosis. “If it was any common person,” he said, “I should scarce doubt of his recovery; I have great hopes of his Majesty’s recovery; but I am afraid it may be retarded by his recollection of his present indisposition. . . . His Majesty’s disorder is attended with symptoms of violence and acuteness. Another species of this indisposition is attended with lowness of spirits and despair; the latter of which is the most difficult to cure.” His analysis certainly implies a knowledge of the existence of the genus manic-depressive insanity, with its opposing phases—mania and depression. When questioned about the cause of the illness, he replied, “From a detail of his Majesty’s mode of life for twenty-seven years, I should rather think that his Majesty’s indisposition has been brought about by using very strong exercise, taking little sustenance, watching, or want of sleep, perhaps when his mind was upon the stretch with very weighty affairs.” Willis’

optimism was evident when he stated that the patient had already improved markedly and that there had been "a partial cessation" of the disorder. How soon, he was asked, did such patients usually recover under his care? "As a rule," he answered, "if I am called in within three months—from three months to fifteen or eighteen months." He said that on rare occasions he had effected a cure in so short a time as six weeks and that the average duration was five to six months.\* Were such patients liable to a recurrence of the disorder? His answer was in the negative, because he considered it not a recurrence but a new disorder when a person had another attack three or four years later. He realized that these patients had a tendency to develop such new disorders, which in his experience might occur even after an interval of eighteen years of health.

Next Doctor Warren was called before the House of Lords Committee. In regard to the outlook for recovery, he said that on inquiry he had found that "the majority of those who have been disordered in a manner similar to his Majesty have recovered." When asked whether the recovery would be complete enough to "render him capable of public business" in the future, he said that he did not have sufficient data to answer that question. He said that there had been no cessation in the disorder and no sign of a returning understanding. Warren exhibited a complete lack of knowledge of psychiatry and an inability to grasp its fundamentals. He failed to recognize that there are separate disease entities in psychiatry such as exist in all the other branches of medical science. "There are no symptoms of this disorder, but the single one of want of understanding," he said. He maintained that the "... words and actions will be determined by the peculiarity of the man, and not by the distemper."†

Sir George Baker held that recovery was "probable." He said that he had first suspected the disorder on the evening of October 22 and that there had been no real improvement in the King's condition recently. Doctors Reynolds, Gisborne, and Pepys added nothing to the picture. Doctor Addington said that similar cases under his care required four months to a year for full recovery, unless "... they pro-

\*These periods are very similar to those found in the statistics from modern mental hospitals.

†In regard to the latter part of the statement, we hold today that the symptomatology of a psychosis is predominantly that of the specific disease from which the patient suffers but that it is profoundly affected and colored by the underlying personality.



ceeded from some immovable cause, such as the enlargement of the bone pressing upon the sensorium, or other similar causes."

Before the Committee of the House of Commons, Doctor Warren was questioned about his experience with psychiatric disorders. "In the course of 27 or 28 years practice," he said, "I have seen many persons disordered in a manner similar to that of his Majesty; some have soon recovered under my sole care; when that has not happened I have always called in persons who make this branch of medicine their particular study, and have sometimes attended in conjunction with them, but afterwards attended in consultation only and in many cases not at all." At a subsequent inquiry, his use of specialists was further reported thus: "This Mode of Treatment has often arisen from Necessity, as it was requisite, for the Good of the Patient, that he should be removed to a Distance from Town, Where it was impossible for Doctor Warren to attend with Regularity consistent with his usual Business: This Removal was necessary for the Sake of Quiet, and other conveniences, which the Patient could not have in Town; sometimes from the Necessity of Coercion, which Doctor Warren has no means of applying; sometimes for the Sake of Particular Nurses and Keepers, which Doctor Warren does not furnish; and from that Diffidence which Doctor Warren ought always to have in himself, when his Patients do not recover as soon as can reasonably be expected."

Doctor Reynolds said that it was his custom to call specialists\* in cases of mental disorder when the pecuniary circumstances permitted or when ". . . Restraint or Coercion is necessary. . . . If no Restraint or Coercion is necessary . . . every Physician of Experience will, I have no doubt, think himself competent to conduct a Patient in such a Case. . . . No liberal man will have any Objection to a Consultation if called for." In outlining the types of cases which should be removed from their homes to houses of reception for mental disorder

\*Oliver Goldsmith, who trained as a physician but could not make a go of it in practice, generally wrote of medicine in an embittered tone. One hundred and seventy-five years ago he sarcastically decried, in terms strikingly similar to those employed today, the extent of specialization in eighteenth-century English medicine: "In other countries, the physician pretends to cure disorders in the lump: the same doctor who combats the gout in the toe, shall pretend to prescribe for a pain in the head; and he who at one time cures a consumption, shall at another time give drugs for a dropsy. How absurd and ridiculous! This is being a mere jack-of-all-trades. Is the animal machine less complicated than a brass pin? Not less than ten different hands are required to make a pin; and shall the body be set right by one single operation?"

ders, Doctor Reynolds wisely observed: "As it is necessary to avoid all Causes of Emotion in such Patients, it may be proper to remove these Patients from their own Families, that the Objects, which are most apt to excite these Emotions, may be kept from them."

When Doctor Willis was questioned before the Committee of the House of Commons in regard to his success in treatment, he gave his celebrated statistics of the recovery rate of his patients. He asserted that nine out of ten of them had recovered completely if they had become his patients within three months of the onset of the disorder. There can be little doubt that these figures were inaccurate. Whether they represent a wilful distortion of fact it is difficult to say; but the chances are that they do not.\*

Doctor Addington's statistics on the recovery rate among his patients were about as favorable as those of Doctor Willis. "I had eight to ten patients there usually at a time," he said, referring to his institution at Reading. "During that time, two patients were admitted, who were reasonably deemed to be incurable at the time of their coming and for years before. During the charge of my patients, and for five years together, at that house, I never had more than two other patients that were not cured within the year, and continued well, as far as I ever knew. Some recovered in a much shorter time." When questioned about the cause of the King's illness most of the physicians made statements which were properly vague; Addington was the only one who had a grasp of the fact that individuals of a certain constitution and personality are particularly liable to the development of this type of mental disorder, from which they generally recover fully. "I thought," he said, "there was something in the very habit of body, as well as in his Majesty's complexion, and in what had been his way of life, that was very favorable to a cure."†

Directly after the report of the physicians was presented to the House of Commons on December 10 there occurred one of the most dramatic sessions in the history of that body. The benches were full and the air was electric with the tension of the anticipated struggle between Pitt and Fox. Pitt rose and, with his Olympian detachment

\*When so rigorous a scientist as Charles Darwin confessed that he had found it necessary to make a full record of adverse scientific findings, whereas he could remember those that were in harmony with his theories, one need not look with too bilious an eye upon the possibility of unconscious wishful forgetting in a gentleman trained to wear the cloth.

†Appendix.

which was so challenging to his opponents, moved that a committee be appointed to search for precedents as to the appointment of a Regent. Fox immediately answered. He saw no need for such a delay, he said; "there was then a person in the Kingdom different from any other person that any existing precedents could refer to—an heir apparent of full age and capacity to exercise the royal power." He asserted that conditions were obviously the same "as in the case of his Majesty's having undergone a natural and perfect demise." He declared that balloting for the Regent undermined the Act of Settlement and established an elective monarchy.

This was, indeed, a paradoxical situation. The Whig party, the upholders of the power of the people, were denying the right of Parliament to select a Regent. They claimed that they, the elected representatives of the people, had no right to decide who should be Regent, but only when the Regent should assume office. The doctrine had been promulgated in party councils by Lord Loughborough, and was accepted by Fox only because the exigencies of the moment demanded it. Whatever the legal aspects of the question might be, the Whigs were determined that the Prince of Wales must be immediately appointed Regent.

Pitt took up the challenge with gusto, his usual calm giving way to a holy zeal. As he rose to refute Fox, he could be heard muttering under his breath, "I'll unwhig him yet!" With eloquent vigor he assailed the Whigs' Regency plans.

"To assert such a right in the Prince of Wales, or any one else," he said, "independent of the decision of the two Houses of Parliament, is little less than treason to the constitution of the country."

Edmund Burke answered with one of his scholarly yet vehement speeches. He contemptuously referred to Pitt as "Prince Opposite," and said ironically ". . . he ought not to measure people of low and timid dispositions by his own aspiring greatness of soul." Where, he asked, was the freedom of debate, where was the privilege of Parliament, if the rights of the Prince of Wales could not be spoken of in that House, without their being liable to be charged with treason by one of the Prince's competitors? This thrust brought the government cohorts to their feet with cries for order. Pitt resented Burke's insinuation that he was seeking the Regency for himself; he was determined not to name him on the committee to search for precedents, a place to which his scholarly leadership in the sphere of political phi-

losophy clearly entitled him. But he finally relented and gave Burke the last place on the committee. Sir Gilbert Elliott, a supporter of the Prince, wryly commented, in his diary entry of December 18, on the vote of 268 to 204 which Pitt obtained on the question of the Regency procedure: "Pitt is the only object the nation can perceive, and the only thing they think valuable in the world and I rather think they would be content and pleased to set aside the whole Royal Family, the Crown, and both Houses of Parliament, if they could keep him by it." Even the House of Lords lost its measured dignity and became a scene of noisy struggle. In one angry exchange Lord Sydney rushed to his feet and exclaimed that he would fight a duel with any of the government's opponents who would meet him.

The Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, who had been so active in intrigue with the Opposition, began to prepare for his retreat when he learned that the physicians expected the King to recover fully within a year. The Duchess of Devonshire noted as early as December 6, the day after Doctor Willis' arrival, that there were rumors of the Chancellor's ratting the Whigs. On December 10 he made an equivocal speech in the House of Lords. He was obviously temporizing. Five days later, when he rose to talk, he appeared to be under stress of great emotion. His voice quavered as he delivered an impassioned avowal of his great loyalty to his King. He whipped himself up to a magnificent climax. "When I forget my Sovereign," he cried, "may God forget me!" And he paused to wipe the tears from his cheeks. During the interval murmurs could be heard throughout the chamber, which was crowded with ermined peers and visiting members of the House of Commons. "God forget you!" muttered Wilkes. "He'll see you damned first!" And Burke exclaimed audibly, "Forget you? Why, it's the best thing that could happen to you."

Not until December 25 did the Chancellor finally and definitely break with the Whigs. Sir Gilbert Elliott wrote on that day, ". . . there was a final explanation with the Chancellor, which terminated in a decided separation between him and our party, to the great joy of Fox, and every one of us except the Prince himself. The Chancellor has been the whole of this time playing a shabby trimming game, keeping himself open to both parties 'till one should become completely victorious. The Prince, who has always had a partiality for the Chancellor, probably on account of his table qualities, has been negotiating, intriguing, and conversing with him incessantly with very

little discretion or prudence all the time. . . . The Chancellor by this means learned the interior of the Prince's affairs and intentions and has been betraying him all the time to Pitt."

It is rather remarkable that outside of intimate political circles Thurlow was not even suspected of duplicity. His dramatic exclamation, "When I forget my Sovereign, may God forget me!" was painted on picture frames, engraved on pocketbooks, and embroidered on samplers by children. Through it he became a popular hero. Although George III, on his recovery, did not flinch from the unpleasant task of reviewing the political and clinical details of his illness, he never learned the truth of Thurlow's double-dealing. It is much to Pitt's credit that despite his dislike of the Chancellor, he did not enlighten the King on this subject. He feared that were George III to learn of Thurlow's disloyalty it might produce a recurrence of his mental disorder.

During the first week of Doctor Willis' direction of the case, the patient improved considerably. He slept better and seemed less agitated. On December 11, he was permitted his first outdoor exercise. On the following day his two little daughters, Mary and Amelia, were held up to the window so that he could see them from the garden. "When he had fixed His eyes upon them, He pulled off His hat, which in His agitation he flung one way, His gloves and cane another, and ran into the House. He burst into tears which however did not last." On the 13th his beloved youngest child, Amelia, then only five, was taken to visit him. With a child's naivete, the charming little golden-haired Princess suddenly volunteered to run and fetch her mother. The physicians were taken aback. After an exchange of frightened glances they yielded, and sent the small messenger after the Queen. While Charlotte was present the King's behavior was quite restrained. Soon after she left, however, he grew very agitated, and during the night recourse was had for the first time to the strait-waistcoat. The humiliation of being physically restrained affected him deeply, and the following morning he declared that he would abdicate. No man who has ever worn a strait-waistcoat, he said, should ever again wear a crown. He complained to Doctor Pepys that the late King of Spain had not been subjected to such debasing treatment when he was mad and ". . . that no King but a King of England could be confined in a strait-waistcoat."

Throughout the remainder of George III's illness, various means of physical restraint were frequently resorted to. Much of the time the monarch wore the strait-waistcoat with its long sleeves and strings tucked up under his ordinary jacket, ready to be made fast as soon as the need arose. Willis seemed to feel that the dread of its application would act as an inhibiting influence. The major portion of many days was passed in a restraint chair specially fashioned for him. It was a movable chair firmly set upon a floor-base of its own, and when the King was strapped into it, it was impossible for him to move it about or tip it over.

The Reverend Doctor Willis believed in strong-arm methods at times. On one occasion, when he began to lecture the King on the indecency of his utterances, the royal patient shouted him down; whereupon he ordered the pages to stuff a handkerchief into his Majesty's mouth. During this period, Greville records in his diary, "About five o'clock in the Morning His Majesty became so ungovernable that recourse was had to the strait-waistcoat: His legs were tied, and he was secured down across his Breast." On that day he remained under this complete restraint for seven hours. Today, even in the poorest public institutions, the application of restraint is no longer permitted as punishment, but reserved almost entirely for the purpose of preventing the patient from hurting himself or others. Not infrequently, George III was forced to wear the waistcoat even when he was not disturbed, as punishment for some infraction of discipline. The horror of being in the waistcoat haunted the King long after his recovery.

Oddly enough, on December 18, the King had "King Lear" read aloud to him. Doctor Pepys, in his letter to the Prince of Wales on that day, said that he felt that this had increased the patient's agitation and confusion. When Doctor Willis was later interrogated, he frankly admitted that he had never read the play and did not really know what it was about. George also had brought to him four volumes of Cibber's plays and some of Foote's. On Doctor Warren's insistence, they were all returned to the library. The poor patient was undoubtedly made worse by the fact that the blisters, which were produced upon his legs as a means of counter-irritation, became badly infected. He suffered a great deal of pain from them, and in his agitation he kept pulling the dressings off the ulcerations.

During the week preceding Christmas, the monarch's behavior became progressively more maniacal. Much of the time he was in high

good humor, laughing and singing at the top of his lungs. On the 23d, while Mr. Dundas, Apothecary and Sergeant Surgeon to the King, was dressing his royal patient's blisters, the King said to him "... tho' He might be born in a Stable in Scotland, there was no reason why He must be a horse." George averaged no more than four hours sleep in twenty-four. He was kept under restraint nearly the whole time. When he was released, he made several sudden and vicious attacks on Doctor Willis' attendants. On one occasion he impulsively ripped a painting from the wall, stating that he did not like it and would not have it near him. On Christmas Day he was angry because the Archbishop of Canterbury had not come to give him the sacrament. He crawled under the sofa, saying that he wished to commune with Jesus without interruption. Apparently, the birth of the Christ Child was much in his mind, for when he got to bed he pulled the pillow under the covers, saying that it was his newborn son, Octavius.

The week between Christmas and New Year was better than the previous week despite a great deal of poor treatment at the hands of the physicians. On December 30, the patient drank more than a gallon of buttermilk, followed by a large dose of castor oil. The result was a sleepless night. Great quantities of musk were used by Doctor Willis in an effort to produce sleep, even though the odor was very offensive to the King. He developed an eruption over the sacrum as the result of irritation from his flannel underwear, which was treated with Turner's cerate.

During the week he frequently played backgammon with Doctor Willis. He made his moves with reasonable correctness, all the while keeping up a steady flow of abnormal conversation. He talked more and more of his undying love for Lady Pembroke, saying that he was King Ahasuerus and she was Esther. The content of his speech was generally erotic when he talked of her. Greville wrote on the 27th, "This Evening He recollected, what he had at times said of Her, & a sense of shame accompanied his transient & deliberate moments. He very feelingly said to one of his Pages He hoped nobody knew what wrong ideas He had had, & what wrong things He had said respecting Her."

The Queen was permitted to visit the King on December 28. Their conversation was almost entirely in German; despite the fact that Doctor Willis did not understand a word of German, he reported that their interview was a happy one. The King would not let the

Queen leave at the end of the stipulated quarter of an hour. When fifty-five minutes had elapsed, he had to be removed forcibly from her presence. He then grew angry and agitated, abusing Doctor Willis and calling him an old fool. He declared that he had told the Queen “. . . that He did not like Her, that He preferred another, That She was mad & had been so these three years, that he would not on any Account admit Her to his Bed till the year 1793 for reasons then improperly explained & such like extravagant & wild conversation.”

With the King in this tragic state the year 1788 drew to a close.



## CHAPTER XVII



*"That the sick ere they're well, must be better, I thought,  
'Twas agreed would hold true to the letter,  
But Warren reversing this maxim, has taught,  
That the sick must be well to grow better."*

ROBERT WILLIS

THE NEW YEAR OPENED with party strife at its highest pitch. On December 30 Mr. Cornwall, the Speaker of the House, was unable to attend Parliament because of illness. The Whigs, who had already accused Pitt of procrastination, intimated that the Speaker's indisposition had been exaggerated in order to produce a further delay. Not until the announcement of the poor man's death, on January 2, would they concede that he had really been ill.

The royal sickroom was not protected from the virus of rabid partisanship. January 1 was the King's best day since his illness began, and he was quiet for seven hours. Doctor Willis, always the optimist, declared that during much of the interval he had been as capable of transacting business as at any time during his life. But Doctor Warren was not so sanguine, and it was he who had charge of issuing the official health bulletin on the morning of January 2. The Queen was not satisfied with Warren's statement of the King's progress, and insisted that it include the phrase, "The King continues mending."

Immediately Doctor Willis and Doctor Warren were at each other's throats. "Why," said Doctor Willis, "you will not allow Him to be mended until he is well." "While any insanity remains," Warren replied, "I cannot see that there is any material alteration. If a man is perfectly reasonable for twenty-three hours, and deranged during the other hour of the twenty-four, I consider him in the same light as if he had no lucid intervals." Their wrangling continued even after they went before the Queen. Warren charged Willis with having said

that he did not possess common sense. "I merely maintained," retorted Willis, "that upon this occasion you have sacrificed your common sense."

The bulletin was finally dispatched, reading, "His Majesty passed yesterday very much in the same manner as He did the day before, has had a very good Night and is this Morning in a comfortable way." The Queen immediately wrote a letter to the King's Ministers complaining of the disputes between the physicians and declaring that she would never see Doctor Warren again. Later in the morning there was pinned up over the fireplace in the anteroom to the King's apartment an unsigned notice: "No one but the Pages are at any time to go into the King's apartment, without being introduced by, or having leave from, Doctor Willis." This infuriated Doctor Warren and Sir George Baker. Warren declared that if he were not allowed to make surprise visits without being accompanied by the Willises, the true state of affairs would be hopelessly obscured. He said that a few days before, when he was about to enter the King's room, Doctor Willis asked him to stay out because the patient was sleeping. He tiptoed in and found his Majesty in most active disorder. He claimed that Doctor Willis then charged him with preventing the King from falling into a much-needed sleep. Warren asserted that the Willises made use of tricks in their management of the patient and that he remained quiet in their presence only out of fear of punishment. He informed the Prince of Wales that he would have to get up a new glossary for him so that he could properly understand the daily reports; "calm" meant "not absolutely raving," and "rather disturbed" signified "an outrageous phrenzy." In retaliation Willis' youngest son circulated among the loyal supporters of the King a verse he had written, describing Doctor Warren's peculiar psychiatric doctrines:

That the sick ere they're well, must be better,  
I thought,  
'Twas agreed would hold true to the letter,  
But Warren, reversing this maxim, has taught,  
That the sick must be *well* to grow *better*.

During the first week of the New Year there was definite clinical improvement. Restraint had to be less frequently employed and the King got more sleep. He resurrected his old interest in Latin and was permitted to work at Cicero's "Offices," but could not keep his atten-

tion to the task for more than a few minutes at a time. There were other abortive attempts at occupational therapy. He played the flute and engaged in architectural drawing, both old interests which had not been pursued in some years. He had always had a penchant for clocks, and now he tinkered with them spasmodically. Although he had never been much interested in cards, he became an enthusiast, even playing before breakfast. During the first week of the New Year he made only one serious attack on an attendant.

The most prominent abnormal symptom was his continued rejection of his Queen and his constant talk of Lady Pembroke. He repeatedly bellowed forth the song,

I made love to Kate,  
Long I sigh'd for she,  
Till I heard of late,  
That she'd a mind for me.

It was obvious to all that he had his fair Lady Elizabeth in mind. During the illness he several times announced that all marriages in England had been annulled. Although he had been repeatedly told that his Consort had remained away on the order of the physicians, he persisted in the belief that, like Queen Vashti in the Book of Esther, who had been deposed for disobeying her royal husband, she had willfully refused to come to him. In his ramblings he frequently spoke of the Countess as Esther, and referred to Queen Charlotte as Vashti.\* At times during January he was found scribbling such tender messages as "Oh Dear Elizabeth ever love thy Prince—who had rather suffer death than leave thee." While playing cards with Doctor Reynolds, he wrote under a knave, "Sir George Baker, Bart., Second Physician to the King and First Physician to Charlotte Late Queen of Great Britain." Often when playing piquet he addressed the Queen of Hearts as "Dear Elizabeth" and kissed it. In a game with Doctor Willis, he exclaimed as he played his King of Hearts, "Oh, but if the Queen of Hearts would fall to the King." And when Willis was forced to play the Queen he leaped up with joy. Late in January he

\*This phantasying of his new love as Esther is reminiscent of the romance a quarter of a century earlier that resulted in his marriage with Charlotte. Charlotte had attracted him because in her girlhood she had tried, like Esther, to dissuade a powerful monarch from oppressing her people. This was the type of romance that appealed to an immature and idealistic youth dominated by a moralistic mother. It is interesting to note that at fifty the pattern was still unchanged.

A New SONG, Sung by Mr. Beard at Ranelagh.

I made love to Kate, long I sigh'd for she, 'Till I heard of late,  
 she'd a mind to me me; I met her on the green, In her best array, So  
 pretty she did seem, She stole my heart away; Oh! then we kiss'd and press'd,  
 were we much to blame? Had you been in my place, why you had done the same. Oh! same.

2.  
 As I fonder grew, she began to prate;  
 Quoth she I'll marry you, and you will marry Kate:  
 But then I laugh'd and swore,  
 I lov'd her more than so;  
 Ty'd each to a rope's-end  
 Is tugging to and fro.  
 Again we kiss'd and press'd, were we much to  
 blame?  
 Had you been in my place, why you had done  
 the same.

3.  
 Then she sigh'd and said she was wond'rous sick,  
 Dicky Katy led, Katy she led Dick;  
 Long we toy'd and play'd  
 Under yonder oak;  
 Katy lost the game,  
 Tho' she play'd in joke.  
 For there we did, alas! what I dare not name;  
 Had you been in my place, why you had done  
 the same.

The song bellowed by the King during his illness, as reproduced from the  
*Universal Magazine* (London, 1759, Vol. 25, page 374)

told Doctor Willis that he had "a Trinity of his own—God, the Reverend Mr. Willis, and Eliza."

On January 7, one month after the previous inquiry, another parliamentary examination of the physicians was begun, which lasted a week. The inquisitors concentrated on Doctors Warren and Willis; in fact, Willis was called before the committee four times. Many of the questions dealt with the bitter disputes which had arisen between the two medical factions. Attempts were made by the Court Party to impugn the integrity and discredit the ability of Doctor Warren, while the Whigs directed their fire against the Reverend Doctor Willis. In Parliament Burke publicly belittled Willis and demanded that the government call Doctor Munro, the director of Bedlam Asylum, to match the "keeper of a mad-house with thirty patients, against the keeper of a mad-house with three hundred."

When Doctor Reynolds was asked by the committee to comment on Doctor Willis' statement that nine out of ten of the patients who came to him within three months of the onset of their illness recovered, he said, "I certainly should require further evidence than the Assertion of any Man, to induce me to believe such a Fact." He also expressed scepticism as to the accuracy of Doctor Addington's statement that in the five years in which he had kept an asylum only four inmates had failed to recover in less than a year. Next to Doctor Warren, Sir George Baker was the least sanguine of the physicians. He said that, although he thought the King's recovery probable, and that he did not consider a case hopeless until it "degenerates into a State of Fatuity," still most persons of the King's age did not get well from such a mental malady. He reported that the pulse had varied between 68 and 126. He pronounced Doctor Willis' optimistic account of his results with his cases as "incredible."

In his testimony, Doctor Warren accused Doctor Willis of having tried to bully him into making unwarrantedly favorable changes in the bulletins of the King's condition by asserting, ". . . a certain Great Person [Queen Charlotte] will not suffer it to go and it will fall on you." He also said that Doctor Willis had made much of the fact that the King was at times well enough to read. He said that he had observed him closely and had never seen him read more than a line and a half at a time. Doctor Warren was very emphatic in his denial that there had been any improvement in George III's condition since he had come on the case two months before.

Doctor Willis again breathed an air of supreme confidence before the committee. When asked what hopes he entertained of recovery he promptly replied, "Such Hopes, that if a Patient under the same Indisposition was in my House, I should not have the least Doubt of his Recovery." He insisted that the King had so greatly improved that he would read aloud several pages at a time and comment intelligently upon what he had read. When asked by a member of the committee, "whether Doctor Willis and the Son have not, in point of Fact, a greater Influence and Control over His Majesty than any other of the Physicians who attend him," the answer was, "Certainly, much more so." With the aid of sympathetic questioners, he made a bold bid for exclusive medical care of George III by advancing the theory that visits by physicians not in daily attendance, as were himself and his son, tended to irritate the patient. He was the only member of the medical staff who asserted that convalescence had already set in.

The exchanges between Doctor Willis and Edmund Burke, whose passionate intensity often provoked doubts in his colleagues as to his own mental condition, were particularly sharp. When Burke asked him what were the symptoms of the malady in its incurable state, the doctor fixed his piercing eyes on the questioner and, pointing a finger, exclaimed: "I will tell *you*," laying great emphasis on the last word. Many of the members held their breath.

Neither Willis nor Warren acquitted himself very honorably in the whole affair. No doubt they were both well-intentioned men, but they let themselves be swept far beyond the bounds of honesty by their fervid political colleagues. That Doctor Warren was an advocate of the Whig cause, the success of which depended wholly upon the King's incurability, rather than an objective scientist, is very strongly suggested by his correspondence with Doctor Munro, the leading psychiatrist of the day. In a letter to Doctor Munro, dated January 21, 1789, he asks, "Can you tell me without much trouble what you consider the symptom or symptoms of incurability?" Had Doctor Warren been primarily interested in his patient, he would have written for advice on treatment rather than for the signs of incurability.

Doctor Munro dictated his answer to his wife, since he himself was too old and feeble to write. "I should look upon that Insanity as likely to prove Incurable," his reply read, "which came on towards the middle phase of Life without any known cause to which it is to be attributed unless it be a family complaint. When the disorder is not

healed by medicine or management; when there is a want of natural sleep." Indeed, Doctor Munro seemed to be supporting Doctor Warren's fears, for his unfavorable prognosis fit the case of the King exactly.

Doctor Willis was as eager as Doctor Warren to prove his side of the case—as is apparent from the diary of the King's equerry, Robert Fulke Greville. Greville was devoted to the King and was naturally a partisan of the Willises, but his sense of fairness could not stomach the gross misrepresentations of the King's condition which they had made, not only to the world at large but to their medical colleagues and even to the official members of the household. One of many critical entries of this type was made on January 30: "I had just before been informed, that Spicer had been out for the Arquebusade Bottle, to put it to his face and shin, having been struck by the King who it seems had endeavored, when the shutters of his Windows were opening, to run into the next room to get to his Pages, but had been stopped by Spicer. I afterwards asked Dr. Willis and the Revd. Mr. Willis, separately, how H. My. was, in order that I might know how far I could trust the Accounts received—Both these Gentlemen assured me that the King was *very quiet*."

The last three weeks of January saw slight but definite amelioration in the symptoms of the illness, although, in truth, none of them entirely disappeared. It was a question of better hours rather than better days. The King was able to be out more; he behaved more quietly during and after the visits of the Queen and the Princesses; restraint was less frequently employed; and the average amount of sleep in twenty-four hours increased from four to four and a half hours. Emetics, followed by courses of quinine, continued to be the chief medication. Blistering was still practised. Hydrotherapy was not regularly prescribed—the patient himself had to suggest the warm tub when he felt very tense and restless. Although he talked frequently of abdicating and retiring to Hanover, he began to show an interest in political affairs. He requested Doctor Pepys to inform the Spanish minister that he had decided to cede Gibraltar for Minorca. His attitude toward Queen Charlotte was a little more sympathetic, although most of the time he was still quite antagonistic toward her. The dominant attitude was exemplified in an utterance on January 13. He never liked her, he said. She had a bad temper and her children were afraid of her. Thoughts of Lady Pembroke contin-

ued to occupy his mind. He wanted to present her with Langley Park, her father's estate, which was up for sale. He tried to get the Willises to take him into Richmond Park, where he planned to break away from his attendants and run to her. He talked less of the fact that all marriages had been annulled, but sent for Paley's *Philosophy*, in which he said one could find that although the law said a man should have but one wife, Nature allowed more. Occasional vicious assaults on the pages continued. He expressed the fear that Doctor Willis' men were plotting to kill him. He referred to his chair of coercion as "the Coronation Chair," and put it upon a platform with a chair on either side of it.

He had periods of greater insight into his illness but they generally resulted in moments of depression. On January 16 he kneeled on his chair and prayed for help, confessing, ". . . that He had left undone those things which He ought to have done, and done those things which He ought not to have done and He prayed God would be pleased either to restore Him to his Senses, or permit that He might die directly."

Fanny Burney's account of her chance meeting with George III in Kew Garden on February 2 gives a typical picture of his behavior at that time. Realizing that such encounters were contrary to the wishes of the Willises and her mistress, Queen Charlotte, she bolted at first sight of the King. "But what was my terror to hear myself pursued! to hear the voice of the King loudly and hoarsely calling after me, 'Miss Burney! Miss Burney!'

"I protest I was ready to die. . . . Nevertheless, on I ran, too terrified to stop, and in search of some short passage, for the garden is full of labyrinths, by which I might escape.

"The steps still pursued me, and still the poor hoarse and altered voice rang in my ears:—more and more footsteps resounded frightfully behind me—the attendants all running to catch their eager master, and the voices of the two Doctor Willises loudly exhorting him not to heat himself so unmercifully. . . .

"Soon after, I heard other voices, shriller, though less nervous, call out, 'Stop! Stop! Stop! . . . Still, therefore, on I flew; and such was my speed, so almost incredible to relate or recollect, that I fairly believe no one of the whole party could have overtaken me, if these words, from one of the attendants, had not reached me, 'Doctor Willis begs you to stop!'



"'I cannot! I cannot!' I answered, still flying on, when he called out, 'You must, ma'am: it hurts the King to run.'

"Then, indeed, I stopped—in a state of fear really amounting to agony. I turned round, I saw the two Doctors had got the King between them, and three attendants of Doctor Willis's were hovering about. . . . When they were within a few yards of me, the King called out, 'Why did you run away?'

"Shocked at a question impossible to answer, yet a little assured by the mild tone of his voice, I instantly forced myself forward, to meet him, though the internal sensation, which satisfied me this was a step the most proper to appease his suspicions and displeasure, was so violently combated by the tremor of my nerves, that I fairly think I may reckon it the greatest effort of personal courage I have ever made.

"The effort answered: I looked up, and met all his wonted benignity of countenance, though something still of wildness in his eyes. Think, however, of my surprise to feel him put both his hands round my two shoulders, and then kiss my cheek.

"I wonder I did not really sink, so exquisite was my affright when I saw him spread out his arms! Involuntarily, I concluded he meant to crush me: but the Willises, who had never seen him till this fatal illness, not knowing how very extraordinary an action this was for him, simply smiled and looked pleased, supposing, perhaps, it was his customary salutation. . . .

"What a conversation followed! . . .

"Everything that came uppermost in his mind he mentioned; he seemed to have just such remains of his flightiness as heated his imagination without deranging his reason, and robbed him of a control over his speech, though nearly in his perfect state of mind as to his opinions. . . .

"He assured me he was quite well—as well as he had ever been in his life. . . . He suddenly stopped, and held me to stop too, and putting his hand on his breast, in the most solemn manner, he gravely and slowly said, 'I will protect you!—I promise you that—and therefore depend upon me!'

"I thanked him; and the Willises, thinking him rather too elevated, came to propose my walking on. 'No, no, no!' he cried, a hundred times in a breath; and their good humour prevailed, and they let him again walk on with his new companion.

"He then gave me a history of his pages, animating almost into a rage, as he related his subjects of displeasure with them, particularly with Mr. Ernst, who, he told me, had been brought up by himself. I hope his ideas upon these men are the results of the mistakes of his malady. . . .

"He next talked to me a great deal of my dear father, and made a thousand inquiries concerning his *History of Music*. This brought him to his favorite theme, Handel; and he told me innumerable anecdotes of him, and particularly that celebrated tale of Handel's saying of himself, when a boy, 'While that boy lives, my music will never want a protector.' And this, he said, I might relate to my father.

"Then he ran over most of his oratorios, attempting to sing the subjects of several airs and choruses, but so dreadfully hoarse that the sound was terrible. . . .

"The good King then greatly affected me. He began upon my revered old friend, Mrs. Delany; and he spoke of her with such warmth—such kindness! 'She was my friend!' he cried, 'and I loved her as a friend! I have made a memorandum when I lost her.

" 'I will show it you.'

"He pulled out a pocketbook, and rummaged sometime but to no purpose.

"The tears stood in his eyes—he wiped them. . . . He then told me he was very much dissatisfied with several of his state officers, and meant to form an entire new establishment. He took a paper out of his pocketbook, and showed me his new list.

"This was the wildest thing that had passed. . . . Then presently he added, 'As to Lord Salisbury, he is out already, as this memorandum will show you, and so are many more. I shall be much better served; and when once I get away, I shall rule with a rod of iron! . . .' And then he saluted me again just as at the meeting, and suffered me to go on."

The provisions for the formation of a Regency had progressed very slowly. Each side accused the other of mischievous procrastination. Lord Porchester, in his lament over the lack of any royal authority, stated that convicts were being executed in Scotland and England without the chance of appealing to the Crown for clemency. The Whigs were as much responsible for the delay as the government—in fact, they had initiated the re-examination of the physicians, which

lasted until the middle of January. Finally, on January 16, Mr. Pitt brought in the restrictions which he advocated, in the form of five resolutions. They were discussed and agreed to in both Houses and then sent to the Queen and the Prince of Wales. The limitations in the power of the Regent were very great. He was not to be permitted to make any peers, nor grant offices, except during the King's pleasure. He could not even lease royal lands but was empowered only to renew old leases. The care of the King's person during the continuation of the illness was committed to the Queen. She was given the management of the households with their four hundred places and patronage amounting to £80,000. A Council of Regency was provided for, upon which the Queen could call for help.

On January 19, Mr. Rolle caused an uproar during the debate in the House of Commons by again requesting an exact definition of the relationship between the Prince of Wales and Mrs. Fitzherbert. He said that more than a year before, when he had asked the same question, Mr. Fox had assured the House that they were not married, but that his constituents were pressing him to repeat the inquiry and, moreover, he moved for an amendment providing the disqualification for the Regency of any one "who is or shall be married to a papist in fact or law." Fox was in Bath taking the waters. Sheridan came to the Prince's defense and accused member Rolle of wishing merely "... to give suspicion wing and disseminate alarm." The matter was let drop precipitously.\*

During the interim between the proposal of the Regency restrictions to Parliament and their final submission, the excitement was intense. Elliott expressed the bitterness of the Whigs when he wrote that the restrictions "... surpassed all that we conceived possible even from Pitt." Burke, who was never very temperate in his speech, was angered into making wild and extravagant declarations. In one debate he reminded the members that they were talking of "a sick King, of a Monarch smitten by the hand of Omnipotence, and that the Almighty had hurled him from his throne, and plunged him into a condition that drew upon him the pity of the meanest peasant in the

\*Stifling the breath of scandal over the relationship of the Prince of Wales to Mrs. Fitzherbert seems to have been one of Sheridan's specific assignments. During January the Duchess of Devonshire noted in her diary: "A law bill was sent to Mrs. Fitzherbert telling her that tomorrow 500 libels would be published declaring the Prince has forfeited his right to the Crown by marrying her—Sheridan called here at 2 on his way to the Booksellers to suppress it."

kingdom." He described the disorder with which George III was afflicted as "a vast sea which rolled in, and, at low tide rolled back, and left a bold and barren shore." He pointed out that after apparent recovery from an illness like the King's some "had committed parricide, others had butchered their sons, and many had done violence to themselves."

London was placarded with announcements that Pitt was running against the Prince of Wales in the Regency election. Opposition newspapers accused Pitt of showing no respect to the Prince, claiming "... that the Copy of the Restrictive Conditions was sent to the Prince of Wales by a Common Footman, who had been given verbal messages to deliver as well." The government papers branded this a lie. It was rumored that the editor of the *Morning Post* had received £5000 for his promise not to attack the Opposition.

Sheridan wrote a skillful letter for the Prince to the Queen, begging her not to become a party to the government's machinations by accepting the task of directing the King's household. The Prince declared that in making this request he was unselfishly struggling for his stricken father to "... maintain unimpaired and undivided the just rights, prerogatives, and dignity of the Crown." A formal protest against the resolutions of Pitt, signed by the Duke of York and the Whig Lords, was entered on the journals of Parliament. Ladies of the Opposition party began to appear in Regency bonnets. One of those worn at the opera cost 7½ guineas and was described as "a mountain of tumbled gauze, with three large feathers in front, tied together with a knot of ribbon, on which was printed in gold letters, 'Honi soit, qui mal y pense, de la Régence!'" The Duke of York gave a series of large dinner parties, the avowed purpose of which was to conciliate the members of Parliament. Jack Payne declared that there need be no fear for the Queen in her association with Pitt, as "Mr. Pitt's chastity will protect the Queen." In the card games at Brooks's, it was the fashion to designate a king as "the lunatic."

Pitt's supporters, although more restrained in their enthusiasm, showed equal ardor. The orange and blue "Constitutional Coats" vied with the "Regency Bonnets." In the House of Lords an enthusiastic supporter, paraphrasing Chatham's designation of Clive as a "heaven-born General," pronounced Pitt a "heaven-born Minister."

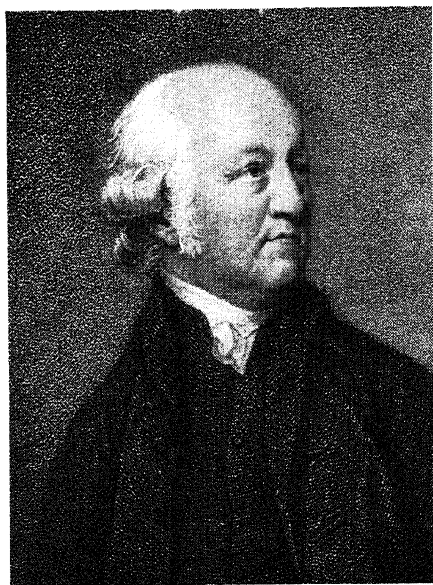
The merchants and bankers of the City gave tangible evidence of their attitude by raising a testimonial subscription fund of £100,000



#### THE REGENCY CRISIS IN CARTOONS

*Upper:* "The Prospect Before Us (Half a Crown Regency)," published December 20, 1788, by James Rowlandson, shows the crown divided above the heads of Pitt and the Queen, who is treading on three plumes, crest of the Prince of Wales. The detested Madame Schwellenberg, Mistress of the Wardrobe, is gloating, as is Warren Hastings (turbaned like an Indian Nabob), who had given the Queen diamonds.

*Lower:* "Blue and Buff Loyalty," published by Rowlandson ten days later, shows the Opposition leader's reactions to successive reports on the King's condition by old Doctor Munro. Fox and many of his colleagues continued to wear the blue and buff of Washington's Continentals long after the American war.



THE LEADING PHYSICIANS IN THE 1788-1789 ILLNESS

*Upper left:* Sir George Baker (1722-1789)

*Upper right:* Doctor Richard Warren (1731-1797)

*Lower left:* Reverend Doctor Francis Willis (1718-1807)

*Lower right:* Sir Lucas Pepys (1742-1830)

for Pitt's personal use. Knowing the type of man with whom they were dealing, arrangements were made that the identity of the contributors was to remain unknown to the minister as well as to the public. Although Pitt was badly in debt, he rejected the munificent honorarium in the noble manner of his great father.

A bill embodying the restrictions was brought in by Pitt on February 5. For a week its thirty-two clauses were analyzed and criticized in tedious detail. It finally passed the House of Commons by a large margin on February 12. On the following day, it was introduced in the House of Lords. On the 17th and 18th that House resolved itself into a committee on the Regency Bill and devoted itself to its discussion. A new restriction was added to the many already imposed upon the Prince Regent—the care of all the minor royal children was to be entrusted to the Queen rather than to him. Further, Prince William, doubtless because of his loyalty to his brother George, was denied a dukedom. Both York and the Prince of Wales deeply resented this.

On February 19, as soon as prayers were over, the Lord Chancellor left the woolsack and informed the Peers that he felt, because of the gains recently made by their sovereign, “. . . that it would be indecent and improper to go on with the proceedings in which they were engaged, under present circumstances, when the principle of the bill might possibly be entirely done away with.” The Lords voted to adjourn until February 24. Surprisingly rapid improvement had taken place in George III's clinical condition after February 6. There had been slow and inconstant progress prior to that time but this period seemed to mark the turning point.

For many years George III had manifested a remarkably individualistic method of speaking. He talked so rapidly that people who were not used to hearing him had great difficulty in understanding him. He asked a great number of questions, but before any attempt could be made to answer one, he would interject a string of “What-what-what's,” in a voice that Beckford described as his “queer gobble voice,” and then race on to the next topic. It is interesting to note that this odd method of speech had entirely disappeared during the illness. It returned in full force on February 7. As evidence of how rapidly the intimate details of the sickroom percolated to the world at large, we find Walpole writing to Horace Mann five days later: “I

now do believe that the King is coming to himself, not in the language of the courtiers to his senses—but from their proof, viz., that he is returned to his what! what! what! which he used to prefix to every sentence, and which is coming to his nonsense.”\* When one realizes that such speech abnormalities are associated with feelings of social insecurity and that during a manic excitement self-consciousness is absent, or at least vastly decreased, the contemporaneous reappearance of the neurotic speech mechanism and disappearance of the psychosis is not so paradoxical. Lord Sheffield’s observation during the peak of the psychosis lends further support to this view: “It is extraordinary that his language is better and his conversation smarter, and that he is infinitely more graceful in his motions and much more active than he was at any period.” George III was a man with strong repressions and inhibitions, and these were lifted during his illness.

Restraint in the waistcoat now became unnecessary. The hours of sleep increased so that by the middle of February there were some nights with more than seven hours sleep. Much of the day was spent walking in the garden and all of the evenings were passed with the Queen and the Princesses. There were still many unregal actions. For instance, on the evening of February 16 King George asked the apothecary, Dundas, if he wanted to see a hog, and taking up a lighted candle, led him to one of his portraits. “Did you ever see such a hog?” he asked. But episodes of behavior as strikingly abnormal as this had become very rare by the middle of February. Lady Harcourt, who knew the King very intimately, and attended the Queen during his 1788 attack of insanity, wrote to her husband on February 11, 1789, that Doctor Francis Willis told her that there was “only a shade of delirium left.” On this she made the very interesting comment: “To you I will own that I am not clear whether the shade they talk of may not be merely his own natural manner, which being different from that of the generality of the world, and very unlike what they may expect from a King, may perhaps be considered by them as some remains of disorder.” And on another occasion she stated that the medical attendants described the King as “bustling.” She added: “This we know, in his days of perfect health would not have appeared extraordinary to us.”

News of the improvement spread so rapidly that the “rats” began

\*The same phenomenon was observed in the 1801 psychosis—the return of this neurotic speech mannerism marked the onset of convalescence.



to seek shelter. Hordes of the nobility came to inquire after their sovereign's health. The Chancellor redoubled his zealous efforts in the King's behalf. Doctor Warren's tone changed completely in his relations with his fellow physicians and the official family at Kew, though he still had to try and hold out some hope to the anxious Whigs. As late as February 13 he told the Duke of Portland privately that the King would be unable to rule for at least a year. The Whigs began to complain of his desertion. "I rather think, as you do," wrote Fox to Fitzpatrick on February 17, "that Warren has been frightened; I am sure, if what I hear is true, that he has not behaved well."

The *Public Bulletin* of February 17 announced: "His Majesty has continued in a State of Amendment for some Time past, and is now in a State of Convalescence." This was the day that both houses of the Irish Parliament petitioned the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to inform the Prince of Wales that he had been elected Regent of Ireland, without restrictions of any kind. The Lord Lieutenant said that his sense of official duty precluded his transmitting such a message and, in consequence, the Irish Parliament appointed a committee of six personally to apprise the Prince of their action. The Irish committee's arrival in London, on February 26, was very much of an anticlimax. The *Public Bulletin* of that morning had read, "His Majesty appears to have an entire cessation from Illness." The Prince received the deputation on the following day. The Irish delegates were handsomely entertained by the royal Princes during their fortnight's stay.\* The Ministerial party declared that to receive them when the King was nearly recovered was akin to treason. This, of course, only spurred the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York to greater extravagances.

During many of the most important phases of the Regency proceedings, Charles James Fox, the great leader of the Whig party, was away recuperating in Bath. He had returned with a serious dysentery after his dash from Bologna. But, whether he was forced to absent himself from London as much as he did is a moot question. To be sure, before his return to England political steps had been taken with

\*During one of their parties when the Prince was immersed in his cups, he entertained them with song. "Amongst other agreeable verses he sang an excellent sea song extremely well—a battle between an English and French ship. The French ship sank and then the humanity and generosity of the 'Britons, who conquer to save.'"

which he had no sympathy. Several Cabinet posts had been promised to men that he would never have chosen. There was a persistent rumor that a jealousy had arisen between Fox and Sheridan. Fox did not even see the answer that the Prince sent to the Cabinet on the Regency restrictions.\*

The Duke of Portland and the Prince, who had been on bad terms for some time, had made up only because of the crisis in the life of the Whig party. Their co-operation was not too hearty. Despite the fact that there were brilliant individuals in the party, there seemed to be no concerted leadership or discipline. Even with his great personal following and his remarkable ability, Fox was too impulsive and erratic to be a great party leader.

In retrospect, one is impressed by the inept manner with which the party functioned at this time of great opportunity. The Parliament of 1788 was the Parliament which had been elected in 1784 after the dismissal of the coalition ministry, and was necessarily hostile to Fox and friendly toward Pitt. But the Whig bungling made a difficult task impossible. When the very important contest for the Speakership of the House between Elliott and Grenville was being balloted for, twenty-six Whigs, including Sheridan and Payne, were too late to vote. Fox's announcement of the Prince's right to the Regency and, later, Sheridan's threat that Parliament might provoke him to assert that right, proved to be painfully inexpedient. If the Whigs had not demanded a second examination of the physicians, the Prince would have been the Regent early in January. Had the Prince of Wales stood adamant and refused to accept the restricted Regency offered him by Pitt, the government would have been in great difficulties.

\*Two replies were drafted, one by Burke and one by Loughborough. Sheridan was displeased with both. The first, he said, was "all fire and tow"; the second "all ice and snow." He then composed a third, but when he was detained late into the night by the revels at Devonshire House on New Year's Day, Mrs. Sheridan made a quick final draft and dispatched it to Carlton House without first showing it to Fox.

## CHAPTER XVIII



*"The Nation will grow drunk with the loyalty of regency; for Kings grow popular by what ever way they lose their heads."*

HORACE WALPOLE

POLITICAL EXIGENCIES made the leaders of the government hurry the King's convalescence to the danger point. Doctor Willis assured them that he could manage his patient so that there would be no danger of relapse. On February 20 Chancellor Thurlow was allowed to remain with the King for one hour and forty minutes and during the interview George conducted himself with rare discretion. Thurlow asked him if he wanted to hear about the recent acts of Parliament but George declined politely. Now that he was recovering so fast, he said, it was his wish to stay quiet. Despite his good reaction to the Chancellor's visit, he was later given two grains of tartar emetic. "It is curious," Greville comments, in recording this fact, "that so often as H.M. has now taken it, how little he suspects the cause of his many sicknesses—but this medicine is so cunningly & so variously masked by Dr. Willis, that it is almost impossible to detect, or even to suspect the Vehicles. At one time it comes in Whey, at another in Asses Milk, Sometimes in Bread and sometimes it becomes successful in bread and Butter, etc., etc." The Chancellor's visit was repeated on the 22nd. On the following day the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York visited for a half hour. The King wept profusely on embracing his renegade sons and they also appeared deeply moved. He talked to his first-born about horses and to his second son about his regiment. Later, the Princes told their intimates that they had found their father far from fully recovered; that he had even confided to them that he was the Chancellor. They felt that the enthusiasm which he had expressed for Latin and for cards was, for him, very abnormal.

On February 23 George III despatched letters to both the Chancellor

and Mr. Pitt. To the latter, he wrote, "I desire Mr. Pitt will confer with the Lord Chancellor that any steps which may be necessary for raising the annual supplies, or any measure that the interests of the nation may require, should not be unnecessarily delayed; for I feel the warmest gratitude for the support and anxiety shown by the nation at large during my tedious illness, which I should ill requite if I did not wish to prevent any further delay in those public measures which it may be necessary to bring forward this year, though I must decline entering into a pressure of business, and indeed for the rest of my life shall expect others to fulfil the duties of their employments, and only keep that superintending eye which can be effected without labour or fatigue. . . ." The letter ended with a request to see Mr. Pitt on the morrow. It was written in the King's own hand and was obviously of his own composition. He must have experienced unusual difficulty in writing it for it contained a large number of scratchings and emendations. The monarch was making an heroic effort to get himself back into harness.

On the 24th, in addition to prolonged visits with the Queen, George received his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, the Chancellor, and Mr. Pitt. The interview with his Prime Minister lasted for more than an hour and a half, and was devoted largely to a discussion of public affairs. The King had previously expressed his hostility toward Pitt for having called in Doctor Addington; but the Princess Royal had succeeded in convincing her father that Pitt had been moved only by a desire to serve his King and his country. When they met, George greeted his minister graciously. "I have perfect confidence in your Conduct," he assured Pitt, "and I now wish to leave all business in your hands. Moreover, I hope we are now united for the rest of our lives and that nothing but death shall separate us. I have no anxiety over what has occurred during my illness since my recovery has shown me how much I owe to God Almighty."

The Reverend Doctor Willis had skilfully emphasized to his patient that his dramatic recovery, just before the Regency could be created, was one of God's miracles—something in the nature of the plot of a Morality Play. This gave the King a very benign attitude toward his affliction and a tolerance of the petty political maneuvers which had taken place while he was ill. He informed himself fully of the subversive activities of Wales and York. He followed the disputes between the medical factions and even read through the testimony of the physicians. At the

end of February, he told Willis that he was aware of the difficulties the doctor and his sons had faced in their struggle in his behalf. "Had they crushed you, Doctor," he said, "they would have crushed me—we must have fallen together." Soon after his recovery, the King begged the Lord Chancellor to make immediate and permanent provision for a Regency to prevent disputes and difficulties should a similar emergency again arise. However, at this time relations between Thurlow and Pitt were so strained that they were unable to agree upon a plan.

The sudden collapse of the Whigs' hopes for a Regency offered an excellent subject for the caricaturists. One of the best was Gillray's "Funeral Procession of Miss Regency." Burke, as a Jesuit Priest, under the title of Ignatius Loyola, is the officiating divine. The chief mourner, entitled "The Princess of W . . . s," is Mrs. Fitzherbert. The second mourners, entitled "Rival Jacobites," are Sheridan and Fox. The Prince occupies the coffin.

The Prince of Wales, the Duke of York, and Prince William all continued to behave badly. Prince George had gambled heavily and lost, and he was never a graceful loser. They were all venomous toward the Willises and their mother, the Queen. When Doctor Willis asked the Duke of York not to go in to see his father on March 4, the Duke flew into a rage and threatened to knock the old man down if he were not immediately admitted. An unhealthy tension ran through all the royal household. One day Prince William chanced to meet Mme. Schwellenburg, one of the Queen's attendants, in a dark passageway at Kew. The lady did not curtsy but later, when she realized what she had done, she apologized to the Prince, saying she had mistaken him for the Duke of York. "Well, you damned old bitch," responded William, "and if I had been the Duke of York, would you not have curtsied to him?"

Both the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York were clamoring to plead their cases personally before the King. On March 6 the King wrote a letter to Queen Charlotte which no doubt he intended her to show to his sons. He asked her to ". . . acquaint both the Prince of Wales and Frederick though I do not mean to decline giving that Attention to Public business, which may be necessary; yet that I propose avoiding all dissensions that may in their Nature agitate Me." Thus thwarted, the Prince employed Sir Gilbert Elliott to draw up an elaborate apology for him. "The paper I am writing for the Prince of Wales," wrote Elliott, early in March, "is intended as a memorial to

be delivered by him to the King, and will be a justification of himself and an accusation of Pitt. It is in the form of a letter, and I find great difficulty in doing it to my mind, for it is expected to be a pretty full argument on all that has happened, and is yet not to depart too much from the manner in which the Prince may be supposed to write himself." This epistle, in its final form, ran to more than ten thousand words and, although well written, was far from convincing. It asserted that the family discord began after the King's removal from Windsor to Kew, that the Queen became enraged at the Prince because he had the keeper of the Privy Purse gather up the jewels, papers, and other private possessions at Windsor immediately after the King's departure. The apologia claimed that after the removal to Kew the care of the King was solely in the hands of the Queen and her immediate advisers, that the Prince and the Duke were almost entirely excluded, and that efforts were even made to keep them from receiving private medical bulletins of their father's condition. The letter also averred that the Prince, on December 15, had authorized the Duke of York to announce to Parliament that the Prince of Wales did not feel that he had the right to assume the position of Regent without a command from Parliament to do so.

The row between the Queen and her sons flared up again over a concert that the King was to give on April 2 at Windsor. A few days earlier the Queen met the Duke of York. "I am commissioned by the King," she said, "to acquaint the Prince of Wales and you that there is to be a concert here on Thursday next, to which you will be very welcome, if you like to come; but it is right to tell you that it is given to those who have supported us through the late business, and therefore you may not choose to be present." The younger advisers of the Prince and Duke wanted them to register a formal protest against their mother's words, but the Duke of Portland prevailed upon them not to do so.

Later in the spring there was an incident which, had it terminated less fortunately, might have seriously retarded the monarch's recovery. The Prince of Wales attended a dinner at the Daubigny Club, where a number of Opposition toasts were given. As the bottle went around, he called on Colonel Lennox, the heir to his uncle, the Duke of Richmond, for a toast. Lennox proposed Mr. Pitt, to whom the Prince refused to drink. In the altercation that followed, the Prince called the Colonel a toady and accused him of being as big a coward as his uncle. Next morning the Prince sent a letter of apology; but the matter did not

die there. A few days later the Duke of York declared before a large company that he had recently heard Colonel Lennox insulted in a way that no man of honor would have tolerated. This was reported to Lennox, who demanded an immediate explanation. The Duke refused but said, "When I am not on duty I wear a brown coat and I am ready to give you satisfaction whenever you please."

They met at twelve paces on Wimbledon Common at dawn. Lennox fired first. The shot carried away one of the Duke's curls. In royal disdain, the Duke refused to return fire, saying that he had come merely to give Lennox satisfaction, and the incident was over. But when the King was informed of the occurrence he was greatly upset. The Queen, on the other hand, maintained a singular nonchalance. When next she saw her second son, she coolly asked, "Did you think Doodle's ball full last night?" At the French Ambassador's ball, held shortly thereafter, the Queen not only received Colonel Lennox graciously but later, when there was no occasion for it, ostentatiously kissed her fan to him half the length of the room.

Prayers of thanksgiving for the monarch's recovery were read in all of the churches on Sunday, March 1. A general illumination and public demonstrations were arranged for the 9th. According to the Marquis of Cornwallis, after dark on March 9, ". . . every house in London was illuminated, and the town from one end to the other a lamp of light; and all the villages round followed the example. There was no mob and no confusion, though every street and lane were so full of people that one might have walked upon their heads from Charing Cross into the City, or to Hyde-Park Corner. I could not get to White's from my house in a carriage. There was a ball that night at Lord Sydney's, and many of the company could not get there until morning. Mr. Pitt's carriage was stopped an hour and a half at the head of the Haymarket, in attempting to go to the ball; he got out and walked to White's where he supped, and when he inquired at two o'clock about his carriage, the answer was, that the carriage was just where he left it."

The two elder Princes of the Blood fared less happily with the mob that was drunk with loyalty. They attended a farewell dinner for the six Irish Deputies at Lord Hertford's and from there they made for the opera. In one of the narrow streets their coach was stopped by other carriages. The mob, recognizing the Princes, called to them, "God Save the King!" The Prince of Wales let down the windows and joined

them in their hallooing. "Long Live the King!" he cried heartily. But the mob was not satisfied. One man called out to him to cry, "Pitt forever!" and "God bless Pitt!" "I will not," said the Prince, and instead he cried, "Fox forever!" and "God bless Fox!" The mob insisted that he cheer for Pitt. "Damn Pitt," said the Prince boldly, "Fox forever!" Some one pulled the coach door open and the Prince tried to jump out among them in order to defend himself; but the Duke of York kept him back with one arm, and with the other struck the man on the head, and called to the coachman to drive on, which he did at a great pace, the coach door flapping about as they went; and so they got to the opera.

All of the country's church bells tolled continuously from noon to sunrise on the 10th, the day on which Parliament was convened by the King's commission. These were not mere gestures of conventional loyalty to the sovereign. George III had suddenly become one of the most beloved of England's rulers. Horace Walpole displayed rare prescience in the irreverent prophecy he had made in February: "The nation will grow drunk with the loyalty of regency," he said, "for kings grow popular by whatever way they lose their heads." George III's illness had produced one of those mysterious surges of mass emotion that sweeps before it the members of all classes and all political groups.

London had not been half so gay at any time during the three decades of George III's reign as it was during the spring of 1789. Indeed, it was far more festive than Paris, which was already in the shadow of the French Revolution. There were great balls given all over London. The more important foreign ministers tried to outdo each other in the splendor of their entertainments. First honors went to the Marquis del Campo, the Spanish Ambassador, who spent £12,000 on a rout at Ranelagh, a fashionable park outside of London. Even Brooks's, the great Whig stronghold, had a celebration at the Opera House at which Mrs. Siddons read *Britannia's Ode*. White's, the Tory Club, gave a magnificent ball at the Pantheon, limited to two hundred subscribers at 3½ guineas a ticket. Very few of the Prince's Whig friends attended. The Duke of Gloucester and his children were the only members of the royal family present. The first Drawing Room after the illness was held on March 26 but was not attended by the King. Sir Gilbert Elliot, the Whig leader, described it graphically. "I have never seen a greater crowd at Court," he wrote, "so great that I was never within a room of the Queen. I took care to be seen by as many



people of all sorts as I could, and reckon my court as well paid as if I had accomplished her Majesty. *All* the women, without only two or three exceptions, had caps with 'God save the King' on them—*our* ladies as well as the others. *All of us* went to Court." The Queen flagrantly snubbed Fox, Burke, Sheridan, and Doctor Warren on that occasion.

Despite an environment which, because of its political and social demands, was unpropitious for recovery from a manic psychosis, the King's convalescence was constantly progressive. On March 15 he returned to his beloved Windsor from which he had been almost forcibly taken three and a half months before. On the next morning he wrote Lord Sydney that he had had his best night's sleep since his illness began. But he was then still far from well. Lady Harcourt described his condition at the time. "Those about the Court were very uneasy at the King's hurried manner," she wrote, "and the captious temper which he betrayed evidently produced by the unusual bustle and the premature intercourse with the public, which Willis much deprecated but could not delay in the Critical Juncture of the proposed Regency. He was full of all kinds of plans for travelling, building, etc., and talked incessantly nor could those about him even venture to remonstrate." "The King," wrote Edmund Burke, "goes through ordinary conversation pretty much in his ordinary manner, but otherwise he is much and materially altered. He is in the most complete subjection to those who are called his attendants, and in reality are his keepers. With regard to others, all jealousy with regard to his authority, a distinguishing feature of his mind, is completely gone. . . . I learn, from authority that is to be trusted, that he does not read the despatches, and will give no opinions or direction with regard to foreign affairs. . . . As to the list of offices, he will sometimes sign two or three warrants and throw away the rest. In short, I believe firmly in his incapacity for business."

One of the major problems for readjustments was George III's relationship with Lady Elizabeth Pembroke. The Duke of York reported that on one of his visits during the middle of March he found his father carefully examining a great number of spectacles and selecting some which he said were for his "dear Eliza." Sir Gilbert Elliot gives an account of the intense interest which the King was reported to have manifested in her at the Queen's concert, early in April: "It is also said that the King showed very marked attention to Lady Pembroke—that the Queen seemed uneasy, and tried to prevent it as often as she

could; but that the Queen being at last engaged with somebody in conversation the King slipped away from her, and got to the other end of the room where Lady Pembroke seemed distressed and behaved with a becoming and maidenish modesty."

George III made use of the occasion of the illness of his "dear Eliza's" nephew to write her a letter assuring her of his love and beseeching her to requite it. Lady Pembroke's embarrassed effort to conciliate her admirer, without yielding to him, is an eloquent indication of her feelings.

Sir [she wrote on April 8]: Your Majesty has always acted by me as the kindest Brother as well as the most gracious of Sovereigns, and since that Sovereign condescends to wish for and ask my friendship, I may then without presumption say that I give it most sincerely and if I might presume to say that I felt like the most affectionate Sister towards an Indulgent Brother, it would exactly express my Sentiments. If I know myself my heart is capable of the warmest gratitude and friendship, and if that friendship can at all be conducive to Your Majesty's happiness, as you do me the honour of saying it will—I shall think myself most happy. In a few days I hope we may be easy about the child, and I shall then be at liberty to go to Richmond.

I must trust your Majesty's indulgence in whatsoever proper forms I may have omitted in writing these lines, and that it may be believed to be unintentional, Being with

The greatest Respect and Attachment

Your Majesty's Most Dutiful Subject, ELIZA. PEMBROKE.

Yet despite these idiosyncrasies which persisted, the King was obviously well on the road to recovery. Doctor Francis Willis had returned to his home at Gretford before the middle of March. The Cabinet leaders had hustled him off because they felt that it would be decidedly improper to have the King under the care of a psychiatrist after they had announced that he was free of symptoms and fit to rule. The other members of the Willis group withdrew gradually. Some of the psychiatrically trained attendants remained in the guise of assistant pages, and a lay son of Doctor Willis' stayed on for a time, presumably as a personal secretary. Doctor Francis Willis kept in active touch with his royal patient through correspondence and occasional visits. In the letter which he wrote the King immediately upon leaving Kew, he counselled him to take especial care of his health, ". . . particularly to endeavour at all times to have if possible six hours sleep; for as Your Majesty's mind is engaged so intensely on so many subjects in the day it must soon be worn out unless suffer'd to refresh itself with proper

sleep." But in spite of Doctor Willis' advice, George III hastened to resume the duties of his office.

The climax of the recovery ceremonies was the state service at St. Paul's on April 23, St. George's Day. It was the greatest demonstration for a king of England since the first days of the restoration. London was only the center of the public rejoicing. The tiniest hamlets had their celebrations. Those about the King feared that his attendance at St. Paul's would be more than he could stand. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury cautioned him against it, but with his convalescence George III regained his stubbornness, and insisted upon going. "My Lord," he said to the Archbishop, "I have twice read over the evidence of the physicians on my case; if I can stand that I can stand anything."

The King rode in the great procession to St. Paul's which was formed by the royal family, the members of the two Houses of Parliament, the great officers of state, the judges and the foreign ambassadors. It made its way through streets thronged with ecstatically loyal subjects. All the church bells rang, and cannon boomed from the Tower and St. James's Park. The procession began at the Houses of Parliament at eight o'clock and reached the Cathedral between eleven and twelve. George III, preceded by the Marquis of Stafford carrying the Sword of State, walked into the church between the Bishop of London and the Dean of St. Paul's. As they came under the dome a choir of five thousand children from the City Charity Schools, accompanied by the organ, intoned the one hundredth Psalm. The King appeared to be greatly moved. "I now feel that I have been ill . . ." he said to the Dean.

Throughout the long service at the Cathedral the Princes of Wales, York, Cumberland, and Gloucester talked to one another with a shocking lack of decency and decorum. But the King conducted himself through the whole arduous trial in a manner to convince even the most skeptical that he was in perfect possession of his faculties. Only for a brief period toward the end of the service did he seem to forget himself. He suddenly extended his arms upward and fixed his eyes on the ceiling. After he had maintained this rigid pose for about a minute, he clasped his hands to his breast and burst into loud sobs. But he recovered himself quickly. As he left the church, he seemed to be in good spirits and talked freely to the persons about him. He returned to the Queen's House between three and four o'clock. Many noticed that in truth he behaved with more dignity than had been his custom before his illness.

Orgies of patriotism broke out among members of every class of society and in all parts of England. Loyal noblemen like the Duke of Ailesbury built monuments to commemorate the sovereign's miraculous recovery. China, ribbons, fans, and almost every conceivable object were inscribed with such mottoes as, "Health restored to one and happiness to millions." Songs both serious and comic were composed to record the events of those frenzied months of political turmoil and their miraculous climax.\*

There was, of course, a minority group, composed of Whig partisans, that was not swept along by the general rejoicing.† During the procession to St. Paul's an occasional huzzah for the Prince of Wales could be heard, especially in the fashionable Pall Mall region. In the summer of 1789 there was published anonymously *The Festival of Wit or Small Talker*, a little volume containing several irreverent poems that poked fun at the excitement over the King's recovery. One was labelled an "Epigram by Peter Pindar":

If blisters to his head apply'd,  
Some little sense bestow,  
What pity it is they were not try'd,  
Some twenty years ago.‡

There was also much criticism among the disaffected of the exorbitant fees which had been paid to George's doctors during his illness. Yet, in view of the physician's customary charge of a guinea, and two thirds of a guinea additional for each mile travelled to make a visit, the fees do not seem excessive. For a visit to Kew they were paid ten guineas, and for attendance at Windsor thirty guineas. Sir George Baker's total remuneration for services rendered during the illness was less than thirteen hundred guineas. The Reverend Doctor Francis Willis and his son, Doctor John Willis, who were in residence at Kew from early in December to the middle of March, were paid on an entirely different scale. Their compensation was very large, even when

\*Appendix.

†Lord George Gordon, although a member of no political party, hated Pitt and the King and was friendly with several Opposition leaders. During 1789 both the Duke of York and Prince William visited him frequently in his cell at Newgate. From the prison Lord George had sent out handbills composed chiefly of scriptural quotations showing that the King's mental disorder was the natural result of his conduct and had been predicted by the Hebrew prophets. He desisted from this only after the Governor of Newgate threatened to move him to a worse cell and to curtail his privileges.

‡Appendix.

one considers the fact that they had to give up private practice for four months. The Willises were considered medical heroes by the government leaders and they were ready to reward them in the manner of conquerors. But no one valued their services as highly as they themselves did. The elder Willis insisted upon a very material honorarium for restoring his sovereign to health, although he was reputed to have amassed a considerable fortune from conducting his private asylum. When Pitt offered him a pension of £1000 a year he grew indignant. It was finally agreed to give him £1500 a year for twenty-one years. His son, Doctor John, was awarded an annual life pension of £650.

On August 27 the King wrote to Pitt, "The warrants in favour of Doctor Willis and his son I have signed, and think this the proper time for mentioning to Mr. Pitt Mr. Thomas Willis, who certainly has the most merit in having supported the old Doctor through his difficulties with the other physicians. What seems the natural provision for him is the first vacant prebendary of Worcester. I have seen so much of him that I can answer for his principles being such as will do credit to my patronizing him. The warrant for the other physicians seems very large, considering their conduct; but I will not enter upon a subject that cannot but give me pain. . . ."

The fame of the Willises as psychiatrists was made. They were immediately so overrun with patients at Gretford that they had to build an additional house. Doctor Francis Willis was even summoned to Portugal to act as psychiatric consultant in the illness of the Queen.

When George III's elation had entirely burned itself out a mild depressive reaction set in. He displayed an unusual lack of energy and a feeling of great weakness and lassitude. During this phase the King was extraordinarily docile. He was easily persuaded that he was not well enough to make his projected journey to Hanover during the summer. The convalescent monarch wrote from Windsor on May 29, "Mr. Pitt may be surprised to see them all [his letters] in another hand, but I own I am not as yet able to copy my own papers: time, air, and sea bathing will I trust restore that tone to my constitution which I am taught to believe I am too unreasonable in having expected would have been effected before this time."

Early on the morning of June 24 the King and Queen set out from the Queen's Lodge at Windsor in a new postcoach for Weymouth, a Dorsetshire watering-place on the Channel. The Queen, as a result of the tremendous strain of the winter, was in poor health. At the

height of the King's illness, Lady Harcourt had noticed that the Queen "... was dreadfully reduced and showed me her stays which would wrap twice over." The journey, which turned out to be a triumphal tour, was made in short stages and lasted nearly a week. The entire way was made through cheering groups of curious and patriotic citizens. The villages were festively decorated and everywhere loyal subjects presented their Majesties with gifts or produced entertainments for them. At New Forest they were given two white greyhounds "peculiarly decorated." At Lyndhurst, where they stayed for two nights, they were entertained by the sleight-of-hand tricks of the then celebrated Mr. Jones. All along the route, they were serenaded with songs written in their honor by local bards.

At Weymouth, they lived in Gloucester Lodge, a plain commodious house looking out on the bathing beach, with a clear view of the ships sailing along the coast. There they led a simple life that delighted George III. Few places ever appealed to him as much as Weymouth, and the summer of 1789 marked the first of a succession of summer visits there. George's day was full and active. He usually rose at six and promenaded until eight. After breakfast he rode horseback, went sailing, bathed, or made inland excursions with his family. After dinner at four he promenaded with the Queen and the Princesses. The evenings were frequently spent at the theatre.\* During the first week the patient did not take sea baths, but thereafter he went bathing a couple of times a week.

According to Miss Burney, the refrain of "God Save the King" was heard everywhere at Weymouth that summer. "They have dressed out every street with labels of 'God Save the King'; all shops have it over the doors, all children wear it in their caps—all labourers in their hats, and all the sailors in their voices; for they never approach the house without shouting it aloud—nor see the King, or his shadow, without beginning to huzza, and going on to three cheers.

"The bathing machines make it their motto over all their windows; and those bathers that belong to the royal dippers wear it in bandeaux on their bonnets, to go into the sea; and have it again, in large letters, round their waists, to encounter the waves. Flannel dresses, tucked

\*The local theatre provided its Music Hall bill-of-fare of songs, dances and impressions, with special patriotic features and such dramatic pieces as "The Irish Widow and the Devil to Pay." While their Majesties were at Weymouth the great Sarah Siddons appeared there in Shakespearean roles. She charged London prices and as a result the house was only half full.

up, and no shoes nor stockings, with bandeaux and girdles, have a most singular appearance; and when first I surveyed these local nymphs, it was with some difficulty I kept my features in order.

"Nor is this all. Think but of the surprise of His Majesty when, the first time of his bathing, he had no sooner popped his royal head under water than a band of music, concealed in a neighbouring machine, struck up 'God save great George our King.'"

The leading members of the Cabinet made excursions to the new "summer palace" and on August 8 the King held a meeting of the Privy Council there. Doctor Thomas Gisborne was the only one of the physicians who made periodic trips to Weymouth to attend the King.

Lady Pembroke joined the King and Queen at Weymouth in July, a fortnight after their arrival, and the King's insane passion for her, which had ruled him throughout his illness, now gave way to a more normal relationship. According to Lady Harcourt, Lady Pembroke "had been very ill in London, probably from agitation about the King's conduct towards her, and also on account of her niece Lady Diana Beauclerk's daughter going off with her Brother-in-law and Lord Bolingbroke from her house. At Weymouth she acted with such propriety that her visit which was much dreaded proved most serviceable for in a short time they met with perfect ease and it became mere friendship and so continued afterward—previous to her coming she had some explanations with the King which entirely destroyed his hopes of succeeding with her."

The stay at Weymouth was proving balm indeed to the convalescent King. The return to London was put off until the middle of September. All symptoms of manic excitement had disappeared during the summer, but the subsequent feeling of dejection persisted well on into the fall. "I cannot say I find myself either in strength or spirits so much recruited as I should have hoped," the King wrote to Pitt, on August 25. A month later he discussed with Lord Harcourt his distaste for wearing the crown. He expressed his "dislike of its burthen and said he kept it only to be of use to his Country." "These as well as every other sentiment," wrote Lady Harcourt, "prove how much he spoke truth in his illness when he used to say he would be a Berkshire Gentleman and no King."

On October 8 he was able to hold a Drawing Room for the first time since his illness. Like many patients who have recovered from a psychiatric illness, he tried as far as possible to blot it out of his mind. He

would not even display a china service sent by the King of Naples on his recovery, because it stirred up poignant memories. He tried desperately to forget the unfilial conduct of his sons. He wrote to the Duke of Clarence, "Though I choose to cast a veil over the unkindness I met with during my illness from the ill-advised conduct of my sons, yet I cannot but feel it." He held firmly to the natural rationalization, that they themselves were pure of heart but had been misled by guileful counsellors. The horror and humiliation of having been restrained in a strait-jacket while he was King of England he could not forget. General Harcourt wrote that George III, when hunting with him on October 14, ". . . again talked of coercion used and asked how could a man sleep with his arms pinioned behind him in a strait-waistcoat and his legs tied to the bedposts. He seemed to treat it as the delirium of a Fever, and as this is the least revolting idea it is proper to encourage." But by this time the King regarded the illness as a dreadful memory. To all intents and purposes he was once more the ruler of the destiny of his people.

One can only speculate about what had caused George III to become definitely psychotic in 1788. The illness came at a period of political calm. Five years before, he had weathered the loss of the American colonies and had even accepted the coalition Ministry without serious effects. Surely, the Hastings trial and the other relatively petty political issues of 1788 were not of sufficient moment to produce such a storm. It is my view that mere responsibility and adversity could not produce a psychosis in George III. His balance was upset by serious inner emotional conflicts. It is general psychiatric knowledge that mental strain is not proportional to the apparent importance of environmental factors, but depends upon the subtle specific response that they evoke. Only rarely is one isolated circumstance the cause of a mental disorder. Attacks of manic-depressive insanity are generally the resultant response, in a vulnerable individual, to a constellation of events. The balance is finally tipped. The failure of the Prince of Wales to mend his ways after his reconciliation with his father, and his inciting of the Duke of York and Prince William to join with him in rebellion were undoubtedly of great importance in producing the psychosis. This subject was frequently alluded to in the patient's psychotic utterances. Psychologically, it may well have been associated with the revolt of the fractious American colonies and it may have been responsible for causing



that topic to figure so prominently during the illness. George III feared that, like the colonies, his thirteen children would revolt and break away from him one by one.

From the nature of George III's utterances about Lady Pembroke during his illness, it seems likely that the psychosis resulted partly from his emotional relationship with her. The delusion in which the simple wish-fulfillment mechanism is clearly intelligible—the belief that all marriages had been annulled—is significant. George III had admired Lady Pembroke for many years, even before her marriage. Queen Charlotte had finished bearing him fifteen children; no doubt he held her largely responsible for the fact that they were beginning to turn out badly. The Queen was far from beautiful; Lady Pembroke had preserved her rare beauty remarkably. During the first part of 1788 the King must suddenly have realized that he was again greatly attracted to her. Immediately an inward conflict arose. He loved her; he wanted her as his Queen. That was obviously impossible. He must be satisfied with being her lover. No, that could not be! He must be a King—his mother had told him that; he was the head of the Church, as well as of the State. That would be acting like his libertine son, the Prince of Wales, whose philandering proclivities he had despised and berated. Moreover, it would hardly be the type of loyalty that Queen Charlotte deserved. George III could not tolerate disloyalty in any one, least of all in himself. He could no longer stand the constant conflict between his rigid conscience and his psycho-sexual desires. Insanity appears to have been the only way out for him.

So conscientious and honest an individual was George III that he could not, when well, comfortably dodge reality. He had none of that facility for postponing and evading issues that more unprincipled men possess. He hated euphemism. He could not tolerate solving problems by pettifoggery or what he termed "metaphysical reasoning." Whenever the necessity developed of compromising with what he considered absolute truth, he suffered painfully. Men of this type in public office are constantly tormented and harassed; only opportunists are really happy in politics.

This rigid, scrupulous psychological constitution was chiefly responsible for George's attacks of mental disorder. Had he been able to delegate unpleasant tasks to his subordinates, leave difficult decisions for others to make, or adopt a "come what come may" attitude and do the best he could with a problem, he would not have become insane.

## CHAPTER XIX



*"The safety of the country is the supreme law,  
and must at all hazards be effected."*

GEORGE III

FOR TWELVE YEARS, from 1789 to 1801, George III was in comparatively sound health. After his recovery in 1789, the orders of his physicians were scrupulously carried out for a short time. To insure sound sleep at night, he was not permitted to nap during the day. Riding horseback after midday in summer was prohibited because the full heat of the sun on the head was felt to be injurious. The physicians' orders also forbade "brooding over business." Queen Charlotte gave up supervising the education of her three youngest daughters in order to devote her full time to ministering to her royal husband's health. King George and his Queen again presented the picture of complete conjugal happiness.

Long and happy summer vacations were passed at Weymouth, which became King George's favorite resort. Almost completely freed of the cares of government during the vacation months, he was exhilarated by the constant round of outdoor activities. There were early morning dips, long walks on the beach, horseback rides into the surrounding country, and frequent sea excursions. The Navy stationed a flotilla at Weymouth during the royal visits. The London theatrical attractions came there during the months of summer court. George took in the whole varied bill of fare, ranging from the great Sarah Siddons' appearance as Rosalind to the exhibition of the Albino Brothers from the Mountains of Chamouni. At Weymouth, the monarch divested himself of royal formality and became an intimate member of the summer colony. He even permitted his equerries to dine with him.

Had George III been temperamentally capable of sticking to his resolve to let his ministers run the kingdom, he could certainly have

done so under Pitt's leadership. But although, after the severe illness of 1788, he never resumed complete domination of all branches of government, he could not play the passive role. His energy forced him into action. Nor did he have enough confidence in others to entrust them with matters of grave concern. He felt the need to guard jealously the prerogatives of the Crown. But unquestionably, he was developing a more mellow and a less aggressive personality. Lord Auckland wrote, in December, 1791, ". . . he speaks even of those who are opposed to his government with complacency, and without a sneer or acrimony." And indeed this marked a great change in the character of the King.

That Pitt, in 1792, was able to force the King to remove Lord Thurlow from the Chancellorship is further evidence of a new royal docility. The antagonism between Pitt and Thurlow was of long standing and the move was one which the Prime Minister had wanted to make for some time. No doubt George III had been aware of Pitt's intentions. The letter he had written Pitt during his convalescence, on April 21, 1789, had necessarily postponed any such action under threat of a recurrence of mental disorder. "Indeed I have, among other blessings," the King had said, "the advantage of having in the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Pitt two men thoroughly fit to conduct the business of their two Houses of Parliament, whose attachment to my person and to the true constitution of this realm is undoubted, and who must see the necessity to my ease as well as the real stability of the State requires their cordially acting together."

But when, in 1792, Lord Thurlow publicly belittled Pitt's efforts toward the abolition of slavery and opposed his financial conservatism, Pitt became infuriated and wrote to his sovereign that either he or Thurlow would have to quit office. This was a unique step in English political history. Its acceptance raised the Treasury Lord to the true status of a Prime Minister. It was a step that George III, in his more stubbornly aggressive days, would doubtless have opposed because of its underlying political principle. But he promptly told Dundas to request Lord Thurlow to deliver up the Great Seal. It remained in commission for two years and was then given to Lord Loughborough.

As the illness faded into the past, the King gradually increased his official activity. In less than two years he was going full tilt.\*

\*There were times when he fussed over the details of troop movements with the same enthusiastic indefatigability which he had displayed during the American War. On July 20, 1791, he wrote to Henry Dundas: "The accounts seem to be so confident that the riot at Birmingham has subsided, that I trust the mis-

True, more of his time was given over to cards and hunting than in the days before the 1788 psychosis; but his grip on affairs of state was steadily strengthening. And indeed there were forces unleashed in his kingdom during these years that needed a steady hand at the helm.

In 1789, the Bastille had fallen and France was in the grip of revolution. At first George III was inclined to view the happenings in France with a dispassionate eye, as if they bore little connection with himself and his people. Not until the attempted flight of Louis XVI in 1791 did he realize that a sweeping anti-monarchical movement was a cornerstone of the Revolution. Then indeed his attitude toward the revolutionaries became one of fear and stubborn hatred. When the Divine Right of Kings was flouted, George III became rabidly partisan.

Ironically enough, his chief colleague in his stand against the revolutionaries was his erstwhile enemy Edmund Burke. Burke had been an ardent champion of the American Revolution, but he was sixty years old now, and the intervening years had brought a change of heart. His *Reflections on the Revolution in France* was a flaming defense of the monarchical system in England. Thirty-two thousand copies were sold soon after its publication in October, 1790.

It was a strange and unpredictable turn of events that made Edmund Burke and George III fight shoulder to shoulder in a common cause. Burke was, indeed, a pathetic figure, broken in physical health and precociously senile. The cacophonous rantings of the overwrought patriot became music to the ears of the King. He declared the *Reflections on the Revolution* a great book and one which "should be read by every gentleman." George III saw himself and Edmund Burke united as fellow-Christians, fighting the dragon of anarchy to make the world safe for civilization. Together they staunchly opposed Burke's erstwhile ally, Charles Fox, who had exclaimed at the fall of the Bastille, "How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world, and how much the best!" Toward the close of Burke's life, he received two unsolicited royal pensions amounting to £3700 annually.

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chief in the neighbouring places will also cease. This is sufficient reason to prevent the taking up the horses of the cavalry except of the Royal Regiment of those Guards which should continue to go to Coventry to relieve the three troops of the 15th, which ought to return to Nottingham, and another troop of the Blues may be sent from Coventry to Wolverhampton. These regiments that have taken up their horses should not turn them again to grass, as the expense of grass money will not be equal to the loss that will attend turning out horses again, particularly if they have begun their march."

The King also wanted to elevate him to the peerage, but the death of Burke's son prevented this. What a transmutation! A man who a decade earlier was anathema to the King had become one of the most honored of his subjects.

Burke had cut himself off from two of his oldest friends. The break with Sheridan came early in 1790 after the Irish playwright had branded him before the House as the "Champion of Despotism." A year later, Burke publicly announced that his intimate friendship with Charles Fox, that had lasted a quarter of a century, was at an end. Fox arose with tears streaming down his cheeks, and, apologizing for the asperity of his remarks, pleaded with his beloved friend to recant. But the embittered Burke remained relentless even on his deathbed.

The violence of Burke's diatribes against the French seemed to be increased after the death in 1794 of his only son, Richard, on whom he doted. It is indeed a melancholy picture that he painted of himself at that time. "I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me have gone before me. They who should have been to me as posterity, are in the place of ancestors. . . . The storm has gone over me, and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth." Of the French nation itself he said in the House of Commons, "France has no longer a place in Europe; it is expunged from the map; its very name should be forgotten. Why, then, need men travel in it? Why need our children learn its language? and why are we to endanger the morals of our ambassadors? who can hardly fail to return from such a land with their principles corrupted, and with a wish to conspire against their own country." He early advocated England's warring against the revolutionaries to restore religion and monarchical government in France and to preserve these institutions for the rest of the world. He exclaimed: "No monarchy, limited or unlimited, nor any of the old republics, can possibly be safe as long as this strange, nameless, wild enthusiastic thing is established in the centre of Europe."

Reaction against the French Revolution in England carried with it a serious threat to the preservation of personal liberty. The country was swept by a mass hysteria. The King, inspired by Burke and actively assisted by Pitt, poured oil upon the fire. George III's political ideology never included personal liberty for the citizens of England. To him liberty was unnecessary and was to be sacrificed whenever it conflicted

with good government as he saw it. The most serious criticism of Pitt as a statesman is the fact that he not only permitted an autocratic and panicky monarch to suppress personal freedom but aided and abetted him. Perhaps the fact that he had himself been declared an "enemy of the human race" by the Commune helped rob Pitt of his customary calm judgment. At the beginning of the French Revolution both he and George III had insisted that English neutrality be preserved. They had looked upon it as a local and private disturbance. But their aplomb was disrupted by the widespread sympathy for the Revolution that suddenly manifested itself in England. Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* appeared early in 1791 as an answer to Burke's *Reflections*. There is little wonder that it produced alarm at Court when it contained such passages as, "The idea of hereditary legislators is as inconsistent as that of hereditary judges or juries; and as absurd as an hereditary wise man." Still more threatening were the reports that it was being widely circulated in Ireland, that its world sale within a few months had reached the incredible total of a million copies. In 1792 the second part of the work, far more virulent than the first, appeared. In it Paine asserted: "It has cost England almost seventy millions sterling to maintain a family imported from abroad, of very inferior capacity to thousands in the Nation." The author was promptly prosecuted for seditious libel. He fled to France but was convicted *in absentia*.

The multiplication, in all parts of England, of societies with revolutionary sympathies became very rapid. On July 14, 1791, numerous celebrations of the fall of the Bastille were held. The one in Birmingham was organized by Doctor Joseph Priestley, the chief discoverer of oxygen, and a leader of Unitarianism, who had been a noisy opponent of the government's American policies. It precipitated a serious riot which lasted three days. Doctor Priestley's house and all of his personal possessions, as well as his chemical apparatus, and his scientific manuscripts, were burned. Because of his radical sympathies, he finally had to flee to America, where he died. His pecuniary losses were made up by popular subscription and by a rate levied on the district where the riot had occurred. George III's very moderate disapproval of the wrongs done by the mob to Doctor Priestley indicates his true feelings. He wrote to the Home Secretary, ". . . though I cannot but feel better pleased that Priestley is the sufferer for the doctrines he and his party have instilled, and that the people see them in their true light; yet

cannot approve of their having employed such atrocious means of showing their discontent.”\*

Not only dissenting clerics, revolutionary agitators, and crackpots joined these radical societies, but also such men of parts as Erskine, Lauderdale, Sheridan, Tierney, Philip Francis, George Romney, the painter, Lord John Russell, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald. Charles James Fox, as England's leading liberal, was in an excellent position to feel the pulse of the people, and he continually belittled any fear of a revolution in England. That the reactionary and substantial elements in the community did not share his complacent optimism is not surprising. Conservative associations of all kinds were formed to fight the subversive doctrines of the friends of the Revolution. Self-appointed guardians of law and order appeared everywhere, spying on their neighbors and threatening those who read radical pamphlets and newspapers. In December, 1792, Grenville introduced his Alien Bill, placing all foreigners in England under the supervision of the government and granting the right to expel them without warning.

On February 1, 1793, the French government, which had declared itself an enemy of all other governments, declared war on England. The more conservative elements of the community developed a zealous hatred of the French, and grew suspicious of all Englishmen with any liberal tendencies. This pestilence of panic and intolerance heavily infected the government leaders. On May 12, 1794, the Home Secretary read before the House of Commons an extraordinary communication from the King which spoke of “a pretended general convention of the people” which had been scheduled “in contempt and defiance of the authority of Parliament, and on principles subversive of the existing laws and constitution.” It stated that books and papers had been seized, on order of the King, which showed that there was a plan afoot to introduce into England, “that system of anarchy and confusion which

\*The King had never been too friendly toward this radical man of science, but he had shown him some degree of tolerance upon his seeking permission to see the Royal Library in 1779. At that time George III wrote to Lord North, “If Dr. Priestley applies to my Librarian, he will have permission to see the Library as other men of science have had; but I can not think the Doctor's character as a politician or divine deserves my appearing at all in it.” To be sure, this was a very different reception from that accorded Samuel Johnson when he visited the King. He was so flattered by George's personal attentions that as he left he exclaimed to the royal librarian, “Sir, they may talk of the King as they will; but he is the finest gentleman I have ever seen.” It must be remembered, however, that Johnson was a Tory and an arch-conservative.

has fatally prevailed in France." Four days later Pitt was able to put through a bill suspending the Habeas Corpus Act, so that persons could be arrested on the merest suspicion of conspiring against the Crown and the government. Almost immediately a group of harmless liberal agitators were jailed and tried. Juries refused to convict on the government's evidence. The populace went wild with joy. The reactionary stampede was seriously slowed up, and both Pitt and the King were discredited.

By this time, the 1788 illness had faded into the background, and George III was in full harness again. "The King had so much business last night," Charlotte wrote to the Prince of Wales at the end of 1794, "that he did not come upstairs till past eight when he signed his Warrants and then played at Cards and again this morning so many Dispatches arrived that he came to Breakfast a quarter before ten and after hurrying very much went to finish His Business and then out to Hunt." Even in the good years, there were abnormal variations in the tempo of the King's life and in his mood. Sometimes when there was serious conflict in the Cabinet George would give way to tears or he would seem tense and exhilarated. At such times he frequently complained of insomnia. Courtiers and statesmen, aware of his instability, watched his mood changes with anxious eyes.\* "Yesterday morning," Glenbervie noted in his diary on one occasion, "the King was apparently in great health and spirits at a review of the 1st Dragoons on Ashford Common. Somebody has observed the appearance of particularly good spirits in the King in public is a token of bad news."

Toward the end of 1794 the King suffered a painful disappointment. During that year the English armies in Flanders, under the command of his favorite son, the Duke of York, had waged a disastrous campaign. Pitt felt it necessary to recall the thirty-one-year-old warrior prince to become Commander-in-Chief at home and to replace him in Europe by General Cornwallis, who had effaced his Yorktown disgrace by brilliant victories in India. The King was disturbed. "Mr. Pitt cannot be surprised," he wrote, "at my being very much hurt at the contents of his letter. Indeed he seems to expect it, but I am certain nothing but

\*To some extent, this had been true ever since the first illness in 1765. In 1770 John Colcroft had written to Chatham, "There is great alarm, and very great disagreement among the ministers. His Majesty is sick, was bled on Sunday, and had no levee yesterday. In times past these were certain symptoms of anxiety and change."



the thinking it his duty could have instigated him to give me so severe a blow. I am neither in a situation of mind nor from inclination inclined to enter more minutely into every part of his letter." The King's letter then launches into a series of rationalizations in an attempt to justify his son's military failures.\* It was followed three days later by another letter, in which King George declined to continue discussing so painful a subject, saying that he had "reluctantly consented" to his recall and more could not be required of him. This was rather typical of his way of meeting problems. His strong sense of duty forced him to face painful reality when anything could be accomplished by so doing, but as soon as the practical issue had been met he hastened to banish the annoyance. He was not a man to permit psychological post-mortems.

Early in 1795 the Prince of Wales was married. Like everything which that gentleman did, it was destined to bring pain to his father. Frightened by the turn of events in France, the Prince had cut himself off from his radical Whig friends three years before. By 1792 his debts had climbed to the amazing figure of £400,000. George III was deaf to the Prince's pleas for help. He stubbornly repeated that there were but two alternatives, retrenchment or marriage. The Prince conceived of the first as an impossibility, since he had half-heartedly tried it without success. In desperation, he chose the latter. Whatever love so thoroughly egocentric an individual was capable of feeling he gave to his real but illegitimate wife, Maria Fitzherbert. But he had had mistresses before; in fact, he had one at that very moment. Why could he not have a Queen as his mistress? She could produce for him an heir to the throne and relief from the incessant cries of his creditors. It was to be a forced marriage with an economic motivation. Queen Charlotte proposed her niece, the Princess of Mecklenburg, for the dubious honor. But George III had a candidate in the person of twenty-seven-year-old Caroline of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, the daughter of his sister, Augusta. The Duke of Malmesbury was sent on a delicate tour of inspection. He privately noted several rather serious defects in the Princess but publicly declared her ideal for Prince George. This may have been an indication of what he thought of England's future King or that he

\*So competent an historian as Holland Rose has concluded that George III had an important part in planning the campaigns of the English forces against the French during the last decade of the century. In fact he holds the King "morally responsible" for the ill-fated siege of Dunkirk under the leadership of his son, the Duke of York, in 1793.

knew George III had already made up his mind that she was to be the royal bride. The monarch had, on several occasions, proven himself to be inexorable in ordering the conjugal affairs of his sons, a right which he had legally bestowed upon himself through his Royal Marriage Act.

Few marriages have started off less auspiciously. The Princess was met and welcomed by Lady Jersey, her newly appointed Chief Lady in Waiting who was then the Prince's elderly mistress. At the wedding, England's "First Gentleman" was so drunk that he had to be supported. The Princess's description of her first experience as a wife is not heartening. "He passed the greatest part of his bridal night under the grate," she said, "where he fell and where I left him."\*

The war against Revolutionary France proved to be very expensive. In 1794 the figure for supplies was put at twenty million pounds and in December of that year a loan was floated for twenty-one millions. The price of food had been rising since 1792. Crops were very bad in 1795. Bread became so dear that distilling from grain was prohibited. Taxes multiplied and increased. There were taxes on servants, horses, carriages, windows, dogs, clocks, watches, wigs, newspapers, advertisements, and on almost everything else. It was during this period that William Pitt initiated the income tax. On October 27, 1795, there was a meeting at Islington of the radical Corresponding Society, which was attended by a crowd estimated at 100,000, the largest mob that had been assembled since Lord Gordon's anti-Catholic riots fifteen years before. On October 29 a hostile crowd of 200,000 lined the streets of London, shouting for bread and peace as the King went to open Parliament. Stones broke the glasses of the Royal Coach.

Things reached a critical point in 1797. Serious mutinies occurred in the Royal Navy at Spithead and the Nore, which were quelled only after the leader, Richard Parker, and twenty-eight of the chief conspirators were executed. The King assumed his characteristic unflinching and unyielding attitude toward this rebellion against authority. "I trust all must now see," he wrote, "that vigour with temper can alone restore discipline in the fleet, and the steps now taken will I trust in a little time bring the men to a sense of their duty, and that the preventing their getting fresh water will soon oblige them to

\*As time went on the Princess's pronouncements on her marriage were no more optimistic. Once on looking backward she said pathetically, "I was the victim of Mammon. The Prince of Wales' debts must be paid and poor little I's person was the pretense, but oh mein Gott I could be the slave of the man I love."

submit." George III was not a cruel man. But he was so convinced of the immorality of disloyalty and revolt that he felt any means of stopping them justified.

The financial situation became very disturbing. Stocks declined rapidly, and in February, 1797, the Bank of England suspended cash payments. Three per cent Consols, which were down to 56 in February, fell to 48 in April.\* "The times," George III wrote Pitt, "require that no measure which may appear on consideration necessary must be deferred for want of the sanction of law; the safety of the country is the supreme law, and must at all hazards be effected."

\*During most of the reign these Government Consolidated Annuities were quoted in the 70's.

## CHAPTER XX



*"In this mixed government, it is highly necessary  
to avoid novelties."*

GEORGE III

WHENEVER THE DOMESTIC PEACE of England was seriously disturbed, the reverberations were exaggerated tenfold in Ireland. There a volatile people had been constantly straining at the remote yet complete control incompetently exercised over it by a nation with alien blood in its veins and with a different religious faith. The violent prejudice of the average Englishman against the Irish Catholic had its roots in the old struggle between the Whigs and the Catholic Stuarts. It had survived so long that in George III's time it was an accepted attitude. Years before, De Foe had said that there were ten thousand stout fellows in England who would shed their last drop of blood against Popery, not knowing whether it was a man or a horse. And it was still true in a measure. Prejudices are easily conceived but hard to kill.

It has been said with considerable justification that in almost all of his attitudes George III could have served as the prototype for the average, established Englishman of substance. In regard to the Catholic question, this was certainly true. But there was something more than the average Englishman's mistrust of Popery which shaped George's fear and hatred of Catholicism. He never forgot for a moment that, as head of the State, he was head of the Church as well. To him, the English church was God's church and he was God's emissary. As Fulford points out, he was the first Defender of the Faith in more than a century who practised its principles.

Religious faith fills an indispensable role in the lives of persons with King George's need for security and certainty. He found strength and peace in the scrupulous performance of church ceremonies. He got satisfaction out of humbling himself before God. In his personal copy of the Prayer Book he had scratched out "our most religious and

gracious King," and substituted "a most miserable sinner." Only his deep religious faith made it possible to face the world after the humiliation he suffered from each attack of insanity.\*

In his religion as in everything else, George III was a great conservative. He consistently opposed any change in dogma and in Church organization. When, in 1772, a bill had been introduced into the Commons to free doctors and lawyers at the universities from subscribing to the Thirty-Nine Articles and another bill to repeal the Test Act, he had written to Lord North, "I am myself a sincere friend to our Constitution, both Ecclesiastical and Civil, and as such a great enemy to any innovations, for, in this mixed government it is highly necessary to avoid novelties."

In questions of Sunday observance and in pursuits disapproved of by the clergy he showed a degree of independence. He attended horse races at Ascot Heath but did not bet. He played cards, and even on Sundays, but for very low stakes. Early in his reign he discontinued the custom of playing hazard at the palace on Twelfth Night because the play became too heavy. He disapproved of masquerades, which had become very dissolute, but he felt that they could not be suppressed legally. When the Bishop of London called upon him on a Sunday to remonstrate with him for riding from town to the country on the Sabbath, the King had his carriage waiting at the door. He also refused the Bishop's request that he discontinue Sunday concerts.

Though he was a hidebound partisan of the Established Church, George III was personally kind to nonconformists of all types. He even visited in the homes of the Welds, the Petres, and other great Catholic families. In the notorious quarrel between the titled Methodist leader, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, the King publicly sided with the Countess. Archbishop Cornwallis and his wife, who was one of the recognized leaders of London's social world, began giving magnificent balls and convivial routs at Lambeth Palace. The Countess of Huntingdon scolded the Archbishop for his worldly extravagance, and he in turn abused her as a Methodist. She then appealed to the King for an audience and was received by the King and Queen at Kew Palace. The interview lasted for an hour, and the King was most gracious. He even complimented her on her zeal

\*Sir Henry Hallford, one of the physicians, said during the fifth attack of mental disorder, "His Majesty had always looked upon his previous visitations of this dreadful calamity as trials of his faith and obedience."

for Methodism, and on the eloquence of the leading Methodist preachers. He told her that one of the Anglican bishops had recently complained of her activities on behalf of the Methodists and he had said to him, "I wish there was a Lady Huntingdon in every diocese in the kingdom." Following his interview with the Countess of Huntingdon, the King sent a sharp reprimand to the Archbishop:

My good Lord Prelate [he wrote]: I could not delay giving you the notification of the grief and concern with which my breast was affected at receiving authentic information that *roués* have made their way into your Palace. At the same time I must signify to you my sentiments on this subject which holds these levities and vain dissipations as utterly inexpedient, if not unlawful, to pass in a residence for many centuries devoted to divine studies, religious retirement, and the extensive exercise of charity and benevolence. I add, in a place where so many of your predecessors have led their lives in such sanctity as has thrown lustre on the pure religion they professed and adored.

From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold these improprieties—not to speak in harsher terms—and on still more pious principles, I trust you will suppress them immediately so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure, or to interpose in a different manner.

May God take your Grace into his Almighty protection.

I remain, my Lord Primate,

Your gracious friend,

G. R.

In spite of his graciousness to individual dissenters of all creeds, George III's attitude toward the Catholic Church was harsh and uncompromising. He saw it as an historic and potentially dangerous foe. He believed that those professing fealty to the Pope were incapable of rendering trustworthy service to any Protestant government. He was particularly worried lest Catholics be granted the right to represent Ireland in Parliament. Pitt, on the other hand, had supported the measures which secured the right of suffrage for Irish Catholics and permitted them to practice law. He even favored allowing dissenters greater freedom of worship than the strict letter of the law provided.

From the time that William Pitt had been called, as a youth of twenty-four, to lead the government, he had been deeply concerned with the difficulties in the relationship between England and Ireland. He favored a union between the two countries, in which there would be but one Parliament, and free trade. The bloody civil war which raged in Ireland after the recall of the liberal and sympathetic Lord

Lieutenant, Earl Fitzwilliam, in 1795, convinced him that the two countries had to be united by a common Parliament. He believed that far-reaching concessions would have to be made to the Catholics in Ireland to achieve real value from the union. They would have to be permitted to serve in Parliament and to hold important state offices.

This liberal attitude was in direct opposition to the King's outspoken views. In 1795 he had written at great length to Pitt outlining his ideas on the subject. "Admitting Roman Catholics to vote in Parliament," he said, "... is contrary to the conduct of every European government, and I believe to that of every State on the globe. In the States of Germany, the Lutheran, Calvinist, and Roman Catholic religions are universally permitted, yet each respective State has but one Church established, to which the States of the country and those holding any civil employment must be conformists. . . .

"Ireland varies from most other countries by property residing almost entirely in the hands of Protestants, whilst the lower classes of the people are chiefly Roman Catholics. The change proposed, therefore, must disoblige the greater number to benefit a few, the inferior orders not being of rank to gain favorably by the change. That they may also be gainers, it is proposed that an army be constantly kept in Ireland, a kind of yeomanry which in reality would be a Roman Catholic police corps, established, which would keep the Protestant interests under awe.

"It is but fair to confess that the whole of this plan is the strongest justification of the old servants of the Crown in Ireland, for having objected to the former indulgences that have been granted, as it is now pretended these have availed nothing, unless this total change of political principle be admitted.

"English government ought well consider before it gives any encouragement to a proposition which cannot fail sooner or later to separate the two kingdoms, or, by way of establishing a similar line of conduct in this kingdom, adopt measures to prevent which my family was invited to mount the throne of this kingdom in preference to the House of Savoy."

Obviously the King had given much thought to the question of admitting Catholics to Parliament. In every way possible he tried to have his attitude sanctioned by the opinions of the leading exponents of the law. One month after writing this letter to Pitt, he addressed communications on the subject to the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Kenyon, and to the Attorney-General, Sir John Scott. He hoped they would

confirm his opinion that his assent to active participation of Catholics in the government would violate both the Constitution of England and his Coronation Oath. He got less definite support from them than he had hoped for. Lord Kenyon held that so long as the supremacy of the Established Church remained unchallenged, concessions could be granted to all nonconformist groups without violating the Constitution or the Coronation Oath. Sir John Scott felt that, since the Coronation Oath prescribed merely that the King should maintain the settlement of the Church generally, the ruler could himself judge the effect on the Church of each proposed statute, and that none was *ipso facto* illegal.

George III spent many anxious hours while the Irish Union was being planned a few years later. Lord Castlereagh, the Secretary for Ireland, had strongly advocated giving the Catholic clergy of Ireland a government stipend after the Union was formed. Both he and Pitt felt that by so doing the government would maintain a greater measure of control over them. But the King vigorously opposed their attitude. "The tolerating Dissenters is fair," he wrote to Pitt in January, 1799, "but the trying to perpetuate a separation in religious opinions by providing for the support of their clergy as an establishment is certainly going far beyond the bounds of justice or policy."

For a time George III cautiously refrained from endorsing the Irish Union. When he found that it did not of necessity imply the admission of Catholics to the new Parliament or any tampering with the primacy of the Established Church in Ireland, he supported it.

The British Parliament voted for Pitt's scheme of union in 1799; but the going was more difficult in Ireland. It took considerable pressure to induce the Irish Parliament to vote itself out of existence. Cornwallis\* and Castlereagh labored mightily to this end; and finally, after the English government had purchased eighty-four Irish pocket boroughs at an expense of £1,260,000, and raised fifty-six Irishmen to the peerage, Pitt persuaded the Irish Parliament to vote for its own extinction in 1800. The people of Ireland were to be represented in the House of Lords of Great Britain and Ireland by four spiritual peers and twenty-eight temporal peers; and by one hundred members in the United House of Commons. All Irish representatives in both Houses were to be professed Anglicans. It was a signal defeat for Catholicism.

\*After Cornwallis had redeemed his American failure by his military success in India, he had been made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.



In August, 1800, after the Union had been effected, Castlereagh came to England to persuade Pitt that there must be additional legislation, so that Catholics could be permitted to represent Ireland in Parliament, as well as in all branches of government service. It was true, he said, that no definite commitments to this effect had been made to the Irish; but they had assumed political emancipation for the Catholics when they had voted for Union. Without such legislation he insisted that the Union could have no great value.

Apparently Castlereagh's plea carried great weight with Pitt. He told his Cabinet that he believed a lasting peace with Ireland would come only if the government were willing to endow the Catholic clergy; if tithes then payable to the Anglican church were commuted; and if a political test were substituted for the religious test, thereby making it possible for Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament and hold offices of state.

George III was in Weymouth at the time, and had not been kept informed as to the progress of events. The Chancellor, Lord Loughborough, had let it be understood that he shared the views expressed by Lord Kenyon and Lord Eldon\* that the King's assent to Catholic Toleration would not be a violation of his Coronation Oath. But when he went to see the King at Weymouth to apprise him of the state of affairs, he indulged in a characteristic bit of double-dealing. He told George that he had decided on more mature consideration that the sovereign of Protestant England could not legitimately give his assent to Catholic Toleration. Possibly the King recognized that the Chancellor's real scheme was to replace, or at least to displace, Pitt.†

The problem of Catholic emancipation was a frequent topic of discussion at cabinet meetings in the autumn of 1800.‡ The Prince of Wales had become an earnest advocate of the measure since his father was opposing it.§ Dundas, who was a loyal supporter of Pitt, told the

\*In 1795, as Attorney General, he was Sir John Scott. When made Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas in 1799, he was created Baron Eldon of Eldon.

†Junius had said of Chancellor Loughborough, ". . . there was something about him which even treachery cannot trust." Some time after the Catholic crisis, George III was told of Loughborough's death. "Are you quite sure that he is really dead?" he asked. "Then he has not left a greater knave behind him in my dominions." Thurlow, Loughborough's predecessor on the Woolsack, on hearing of the royal remarks, growled, "Then I presume His Majesty is quite sane at present."

‡Appendix.

§When the King became incompetent and the Prince came into power as Regent he then became almost as active in his opposition to Catholic Toleration as his father had been.

King that he felt that the Coronation Oath could bind him only so far as independent executive action was concerned and did not control him in his assent to a legislative act. "None of your Scotch metaphysics, Mr. Dundas! None of your Scotch metaphysics!" was the testy reply. At a levee on January 28, 1801, the King remarked that support of Catholic emancipation was "the most Jacobinical thing I ever heard of." "I shall reckon any man my personal enemy," he said to Dundas, "who proposes any such measure."

With every step Pitt took favoring the Catholics, George's uneasiness mounted. In the days when Thurlow had been Chancellor, Pitt had been easier to keep in line, for Thurlow was a bulwark of reaction who had supported all the King's anti-Catholic policies. Now that Thurlow was gone, George was afraid. He had from the beginning regarded the more moderate measures sponsored by Pitt as dangerous innovations which might lead the Irish Catholics to demand full political rights.\*

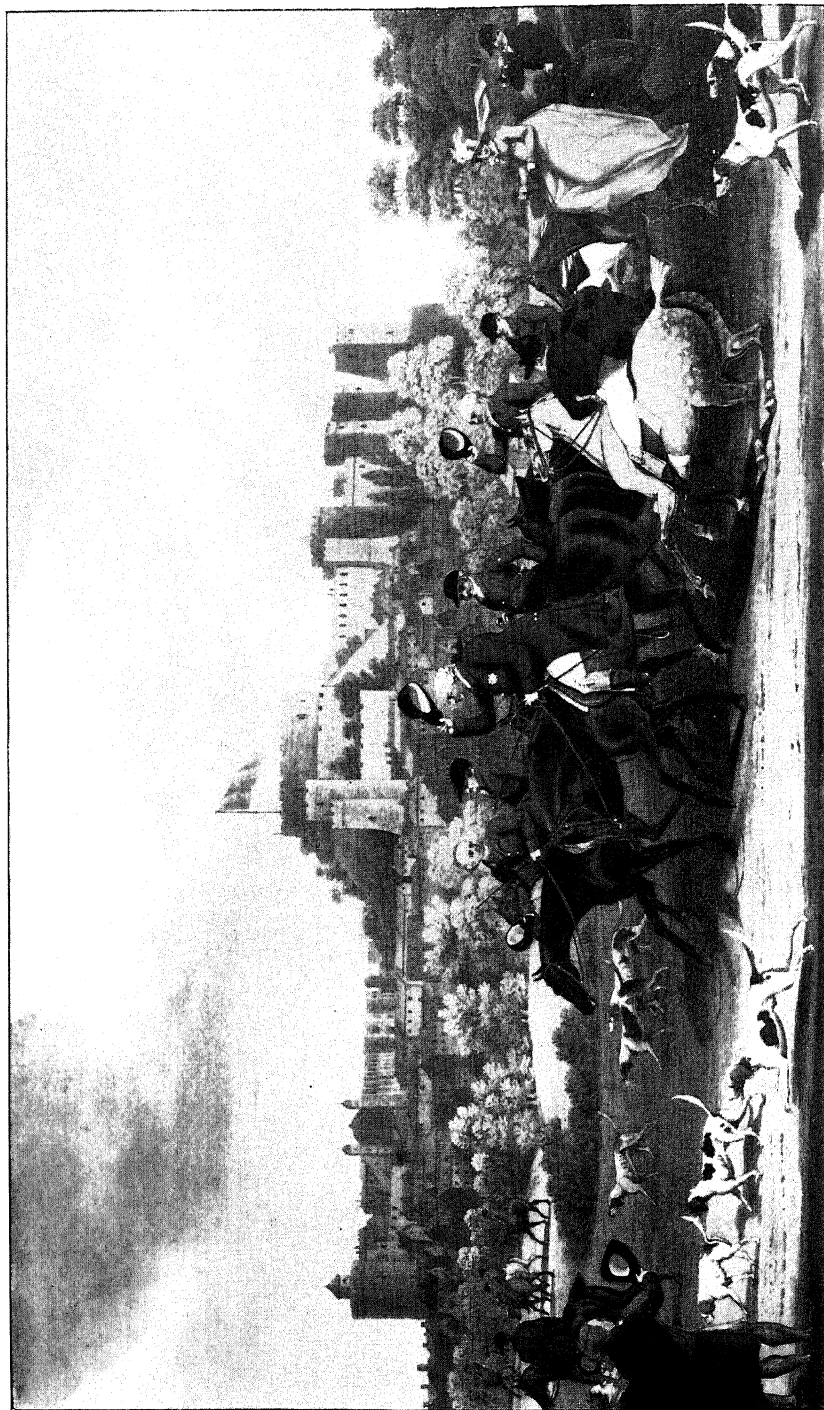
For months the King had known that a bill for Catholic Toleration was to be introduced. The anxiety resulting from this endless waiting generated more tension than he could bear and forced him to precipitate the issue prematurely. On January 29, 1801, the King engaged Henry Addington, the Speaker of the House, to go to Pitt and try to persuade him to drop his madcap scheme. Addington was the son of the Doctor Addington who had attended George III in his 1788 illness and who had been the personal friend and physician of Pitt's father, Lord Chatham. Young Pitt and young Addington were close companions, and the King hoped that because of this relationship Addington would be able to sway Pitt from his purpose. But Addington had neither force nor ability, and Pitt thrust his suggestions aside.

\*He knew that his Prime Minister did not fully share his royal prejudice against any fundamental change in the agencies of government. He had looked somewhat askance on his speaking in favor of allowing dissenters greater freedom of worship than the strict letter of the law permitted. The monarch felt that closing one's eyes to such violations was a very different matter from advocating their legalization. The only one of Pitt's reform measures that George III ever favored was his support of Wilberforce's efforts to abolish slavery. And even in regard to this, he did a right-about-face. When the French Revolution progressed he found, to his dismay, that almost all of the active abolitionists were supporters of the Revolution. He became panicky about being found in such company and withdrew his support from the only social reform that he had ever endorsed. Even during the time of his friendliness toward abolition, the King never conceived of it as a great social issue. He used constantly to twit Wilberforce, its chief proponent, by inquiring how his "black friends" were getting along.

**ANTI-SACCHARITES, - or - JOHN BULL, and his Family leaving off the use of SUGAR.**  
*To the Masters & Managers of Families in Great Britain, this Noble Example of ECONOMY, is respectfully submitted.*



To support Pitt's general scheme of national economy, the royal family gave up sugar in their tea. Gillray's cartoon, published in 1792, shows the five princesses disgruntled



Courtesy of M. Knoedler and Co.

“HIS MAJESTY KING GEO. III RETURNING FROM HUNTING”

The royal party is nearing Windsor Castle. An aquatint engraved in colors after Pollard by Dubourg

On January 31 Pitt responded to the Addington negotiations with a fifteen-hundred-word letter to the King. Before Parliament met, he wrote, he had intended submitting to his sovereign the opinions of the Cabinet ". . . on the important questions respecting the Catholics and Dissenters, which must naturally be agitated in consequence of the Union." He professed to have been surprised and pained at learning how intense was the King's opposition to Catholic Toleration. Pitt stated that the prevailing sentiments of the Cabinet seemed favorable to this measure. Then he gave a clear and logical presentation of his own reasons for favoring the measure, adding that ". . . this opinion is unalterably fixed." He begged the King to consider his arguments carefully, assuring him that he would not press him for his decision nor permit the matter to come up in Parliament prematurely. If the royal decision remained adverse, he asked to be permitted to resign his office. Apparently, Pitt entertained some hope of changing the King's mind—never an easy undertaking, but on the Catholic issue an impossible one.\*

George III sent an immediate reply. He had learned from experience not to permit himself to mull over and postpone important decisions. He began by expressing his "cordial affection" for Pitt and his "high opinion of his talents and integrity." He then said that his religious and political duty forced him to interpret his Coronation Oath as prohibiting active participation in the government of not only all who were loyal to the Pope but of all who were unable "to receive the Holy Communion agreeably to the rites of the Church of England." In his opinion, Pitt's proposal entailed ". . . the complete overthrow of the whole fabric" of the Constitution. He went on to say that his approval of the Act of Union with Ireland had been ". . . principally founded on a trust that the uniting the Established Churches of the two Kingdoms would forever shut the door to any further measures with respect to the Roman Catholics." The letter then continued, ". . . my opinions are not those formed on the moment, but such as I have imbibed for forty years, and from which I never can depart; but, Mr. Pitt once acquainted with my sentiments, his assuring me that he will stave off the only question whereon I fear from his letter we can never agree—for the advantage and comfort of continuing to have his advice and exertions in public affairs I will certainly abstain from talking on this subject, which is the one nearest my heart. I cannot help if others pre-

\*During the previous year Pitt had written Grenville, "I will write [the King] at the same time to remonstrate him a little against notions which he seems forming every day, more and more of excluding Catholics in case of a Union."

tend to guess at my opinions, which I have never disguised: but if those who unfortunately differ with me will keep this subject at rest, I will on my part, most correctly on my part, be silent also; but this restraint I shall put on myself from affection for Mr. Pitt, but further I cannot go, for I cannot sacrifice my duty to any consideration.

"Though I do not pretend to have the power of changing Mr. Pitt's opinion, when thus unfortunately fixed, yet I shall hope his sense of duty will prevent his retiring from his present situation to the end of my life. . . ."

Had Pitt been Robert Walpole he might have listened to the King and worried no more about the whole affair. Had he been Lord North he would gladly have kept postponing the issue. But he was William Pitt, son of the great Lord Chatham. So he resigned. On February 3, he asked to be relieved of his office just as soon as a new government could be formed.

Pitt's sincerity in these proceedings was questioned by many of his contemporaries. They accused him of making the Catholic question a decisive issue so that he could gracefully resign the leadership of the government. The King himself said that Pitt had resigned ". . . because he could not carry on the war and could not bring his mind to make the peace." Some expressed the view that Pitt's resigning over the Catholic issue was evidence that he had inherited the taint of insanity from his father.\* However, when one considers Pitt's political rectitude and his high sense of duty, it seems highly probable that his resignation in 1801 was prompted solely by the King's attitude on the Catholic question.†

To appreciate the dilemma in which the King found himself at this fateful moment, one has to analyze his relationship with Pitt. Historians, following the ideas of Horace Walpole and Malmesbury, have said that he was not altogether unwilling to be rid of his great minister. It is true that George III was jealous of his authority, and that he had

\*According to Miss Rose, Pitt had been in bad health during the spring of 1799. At that time he was ordered "to rest his mind as much as possible, and did not go for some time to the House of Commons. For a time, except when the Bishop of Lincoln was in London, he saw only my father and Lord Melville." Her father was, however, of the opinion "that there was not the slightest mental failure in Mr. Pitt, nothing but depression of spirits—overwork on a slight constitution."

†A quarter of a century later Lord Eldon, who was an active participant in the affair, declared that Pitt had practically guaranteed Catholic emancipation to the Irish.

never played second fiddle so consistently to any minister before. There can be no doubt that there were moments when he resented his subservient political position. He had had to yield to Pitt on at least three important issues—the dismissal of Thurlow from the Chancellorship, the recall of the Duke of York from the command of the Army in Flanders, and the negotiation by Lord Malmesbury for peace with France. But there had been a certain amount of give and take. In fact, in lesser matters, particularly questions of preferment, the King dictated to his minister. There was one notable example of this. The King received word from Pitt that the Archbishop of Canterbury was dead and that Pitt would wait on him the following morning. He immediately rode over to Bishop Sutton, who was residing at Windsor, called him from the table and said, “My Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, I wish you joy. Not a word: go back to your guests.”

George III was generally accurate in his judgment of men and he clearly saw that Pitt was a great man. He recognized that the relative smoothness of internal affairs and the satisfactory financial position of England during one of the most serious periods in its history were in a large measure due to Pitt. He appreciated his minister's integrity, his sense of duty, and his lofty disinterestedness. Had he not refused the remunerative Tellership of the Exchequer and declined a vacancy in the Order of the Garter? The Wardenship of the Cinque Ports was finally accepted only after his sovereign had said, “I am so bent on this that I shall be seriously offended at any attempt to decline.” Another such man could not be found in all England.

Even after Pitt had precipitated the crisis in 1801 and had refused the royal offer to remain the First Minister as long as he lived, George III did not distort his picture of the man—an eloquent testimony of his high regard. On February 11, 1801, in speaking to Rose of Pitt, he said, “. . . that his whole conduct was infinitely more honorable on retiring than that of any of his predecessors.” He even wrote Pitt that his respect for him had not been diminished, beginning his letter with the unusual salutation, “My dear Pitt.” George spoke to one of his advisers of the greatness of Pitt's mind. He said that he had found that it was not only capable of analyzing complexities instantly but that it had great depth and breadth of vision. On Pitt's retiring, the King invited him to remain his personal friend. The minister said that he felt he must regretfully decline this signal honor, since such a relationship would weaken the administration of his successor.

Apparently, until George III received Pitt's final letter of resignation, he felt that everything would work out to his satisfaction. On February 3 he was in a particularly expansive mood; while he was being robed for Parliament he engaged in casual conversation with the Duke of Norfolk, in the presence of several other members of his court. "I believe, my Lord," he said, "you have a very fine old place at Arundel." The Duke answered that he had. "I hear," said the King, "you are making considerable alterations in it." "I am," said the Duke. "Take care," added the King, "not to meddle with the foundations." And he looked significantly at some of the Lords.

Poor George could not yet grasp that his own "foundations" of government were toppling dangerously. Of that same day, Lord Glenbervie wrote in his diary: "Both houses were remarkably full yesterday and the King looked particularly well and read his speech with particular energy and clearness, much beyond what had been usual for him for the last ten or fifteen years."

But by the next day, the heavy blow had fallen. Pitt had resigned. George had to accept the inevitable. His response was immediate. On February 5 George III wrote Pitt, accepting his resignation. The timid child who had been molded by his mother into a King, the insecure adolescent who had bemoaned his own weakness, had forced himself to make his decision with regal swiftness and certainty. But he could not sustain the pose. Immediately he became frightened. He could not face what lay ahead of him.



## CHAPTER XXI



*"Lord Malmesbury, you and I have lived on the active theatre of this world these thirty years. If we are not become wise enough to consider every event which happens quietly and with acquiescence, we have lived negligently."*

GEORGE III

THE PRESSURE OF THE momentous decision of 1801 brought out the flaws in the King's armor. No sooner had George III decided to accept Pitt's resignation than neurotic doubt began to gnaw at his peace of mind. Should he follow the course he had chosen? Or should he undo what he had done? Restless nights followed anguished days. The crucial question was, should he sacrifice Pitt's support and guidance for his own religious convictions? In his frenzied quest for the answer, he kept saying his Coronation Oath over and over to himself until he grew so weary of it that it stupefied him. One day he had his faithful equerry, General Garth, read it aloud to him as he paced the floor, hoping that through hearing the words from the mouth of another he might be able to achieve objective judgment. He was particularly disturbed by the third question in the Oath which had been solemnly asked him by the Archbishop of Canterbury four decades before: "Will you to the utmost of your power maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant reformed religion established by Law? And will you preserve unto the bishops and clergy of this realm, and to the churches committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?" When General Garth finished reading this part of the oath, George interrupted him. "Where is that power on earth," he asked passionately, "to absolve me from due observance of every sentence of that oath? No, I had rather beg my bread from door to door throughout Europe than consent to any such measure!"

The problem of the Oath continued to obsess him. Time and time again, he read it aloud to his family, vainly hoping that the sound of the words would bring him strength of discernment. "If I violate it," he said, "I am no longer legal Sovereign of this country, but it falls to the House of Savoy." The Duke of York assured his father that he had also come to the decision, that no matter what happened, the sanctity of the Oath must be preserved.

Friday, February 13, was a fast day, snowy and cold. In the morning King George, troubled in mind and spirit, went to church. Perhaps in communion with his God, he could find an answer to the problems that beset him. Suddenly, in the middle of the service, he rose to his feet. "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation,"\* he read in a loud voice, "and I said, 'It is a people that do err in their hearts; for they have not known my ways.'"

The congregation was stirred and troubled by the King's outburst. He too must have been dismayed by his own act, for when the service was over, he knelt for a long time in silent prayer. The cold stone under his knees, the wintry air penetrating from outside chilled him to the bone.

The following day Addington, who was having frequent conferences with the King in an effort to form a new government, noticed that he was not well and cautioned him to leave London for a short time; but this he would not do. On the 15th he was quite hoarse. He began taking large doses of emetics and James's Powders under the direction of Doctors Gisborne and Reynolds. On the 17th Addington found him in a chair, wrapped in a black velvet cloak. He looked flushed with excitement and "his manner was more hurried." By this time he was really ill. The Duke of Portland, one of the members of the Pitt government who remained in the new Cabinet, had frequent meetings with the King at this period. On the 18th he observed that George III spoke to him strangely in a very loud voice. The King admitted to his closest advisers that he was not well. "My bodily health is reasonably good," he said to Addington. "I have, I trust, good common sense, and, I believe, a good heart; but my nerves are weak. I am sensible of that. Your father said, twelve years ago, that quiet was what I wanted, and that I must have." He also talked to Lord Eldon of the 1788 attack and recounted many details of the illness. He spoke pathetically of his horror when he had realized, during lucid intervals, that he was men-

\*George III had ruled England for just forty years.

tally disordered. He reminded Eldon of some of the questions he had asked the physicians during their examination before the Privy Council in 1788.

Before the week was out, the court was seriously alarmed over the King. His garrulousness, his racing from topic to topic, and his indiscreet utterances harked back to his earlier attacks and boded ill for the days to come. Though the condition had not yet been officially recognized, Lord St. Helens observed "... that he was agitated and hurried—and often thought aloud—said evidently what was on his mind, but not intended to be part of the conversation." Glenbervie noted the disquieting symptoms in his diary on February 23. "But in his case," he commented cautiously, "suspicions have so often arisen which have proved groundless that I had become sceptical."

Not only did George III immediately realize that he was ill but he recognized the precipitating cause of his disorder. When Lord Chatham, with courtly euphemism, inquired about his cold he replied, "It is well, but what else I have I owe to your brother." Pitt himself was greatly upset by the King's condition. He wept considerably in the presence of his intimate friends, and his physician, Doctor Farquhar, had to give him medical aid. He probably felt his responsibility in the matter all the more keenly because in his mind he associated the monarch's illness with that of his own father.

George was the only member of the household who would admit in the beginning that he had a "nervous condition." When the Prince of Wales said to the Queen that he had found his father "heated and feverish" she replied angrily, "He is not. He has not been feverish." The King was not, as yet, so seriously disturbed that he was incapable of sustaining normal behavior on important occasions. On the 20th he received his new ministers and conducted himself admirably. Later in the day he harangued Lord Eldon in justification of his interpretation of the Coronation Oath, and read sentences from Blackstone to prove his case.

Doctor John Willis was called on the same day and immediately requested that his father and his younger brothers be sent for. There was a great deal of resistance against calling in the old doctor, who was then eighty-three. The King had exacted assurance from the Queen, some time after the recovery in 1789, that he would never again be under his care. The government leaders were afraid that Doctor Willis' presence, which the outspoken old man would never permit to remain a

secret, would make the recurrence of the psychosis known to the world. And they had been making serious efforts to cloak the true nature of the disorder by stressing the fever, the cold and cough, the fear of "black jaundice," etc. Old Doctor Francis Willis was sent for, the order was countermanded, and then he was again sent for. In all probability, it was Pitt's insistence that was responsible for his finally being summoned. He did not arrive until February 25. During the night of the 21st Doctor John Willis did not retire at all. He said that ". . . the patient was in the height of a phrenzy fever—as bad as the worst period in 1788." The pulse reached 144.

By the 22nd, the royal patient was so ill that daily public bulletins had to be issued, but they were brief and evasive. As Whitbread remarked in Parliament some years later, if the public had not been educated by its knowledge of the 1788 disorder they would hardly have guessed the true nature of the 1801 illness from the official notices. There was no parliamentary examination of the attending physicians during this attack because Parliament was already in session and its prorogation by commission did not have to be debated. Nor was there any official proposal of a Regency. Despite the fact that there were periods when the sovereign was clearly incompetent, the issue was not raised in Parliament.\* Pitt admitted to his intimates that he was remaining away from the House to avoid embarrassing questions. This anomalous state was tolerated chiefly because the government itself was in such a chaotic state. The new ministers had not yet received their commissions when King George became ill. The old ministers naturally felt constrained from initiating any measures of importance.

On February 23 the royal patient lay motionless for several hours in an hysterical, stuporous state. Immediately on rousing he said, "I am better now, but I will remain true to the Church." During the night it was very hard to get him into bed. On the 24th the Official Bulletin read, "His Majesty is thought not to be worse today but still continues to have fever." His pulse reached 140 during the day. This, no doubt, was an index of his restless excitement, and was a "fever" in that sense rather than an elevation in body temperature. Officialdom welcomed this ambiguity.

The Willises were not in the least squeamish about handling legal technicalities. On February 24, the King signed the commission for the repeal of the Brown Bread Act—an emergency economy measure

\*Some years later the former ministers were publicly criticized for having permitted such extra-legal practices.

which had declared the use of any bread but brown bread illegal. It was a move of some importance. Yet the Chancellor, Lord Loughborough, admitted later that he was not even present at the time the Act was signed. Doctor John Willis merely hustled it into the royal presence and brought it out with the royal sign manual upon it, observing that "... there would be no difficulty in obtaining the royal signature to a dozen papers respecting which no detailed statements were necessary." When the bill reached the House of Lords the Duke of Norfolk "... was very curious to examine the signature." Charles Fox expressed very strong convictions about the situation. "My opinion is," he said, "that if Willis and his people are with the King he is not fit to govern, whatever his apparent state of sanity may be, and that it turns chiefly upon that point. Whoever is in fear of the rough prescriptions that such physicians may prescribe, cannot be a free agent, even supposing him to be rational."

On the 26th, Mr. Addington, who had seen the King twice daily, remarked that it was generally agreed that his condition was more like that of his convalescence in 1789 than that of the worst periods in 1788. Mr. Rose noted on the 27th that thus far it had not been necessary to employ the restraint of the strait-jacket, a procedure of which the patient had mortal terror; but shortly thereafter its use was begun. By this time, Sir Lucas Pepys, one of the physicians in the 1788 attack, and Sir Francis Milman, a general practitioner, had joined the three Willises, and Doctors Reynolds and Gisborne. Sir George Baker, whose reputation had become considerably dimmed at court during the previous illness, was not called in. Doctor Richard Warren had died. Doctor John Turton, who was a Physician in Ordinary to the King and the Prince of Wales, attended only irregularly.

On the night of February 27 the royal patient had only two and a half hours of uninterrupted sleep. Insomnia had become one of the difficult problems in the attack. When other remedies failed, Mr. Addington, whose political nickname was "The Doctor," suggested a remedy that he had heard his father, the psychiatrist, praise highly—stuffing the patient's pillow with hops. This was said to have had good results. Generous doses of quinine and port wine were administered throughout the illness. On the last day of February the King's use of the familiar "What-what-what" returned. Largely on the basis of this circumstance, the Willises predicted that recovery would occur in ten days to three weeks.

During the afternoon and night of March 1 there was a sudden turn

for the worse. The patient became as violently upset as he had been at any time during the 1788 illness. He was given a strong dose of calomel. His heart showed signs of weakening under the strain of the maniacal frenzy. His pulse kept in the neighborhood of 136. At noon the royal family was called together outside the sovereign's door, quiet for once, their animosities silenced by what they feared—or hoped—was the imminence of death. Four long hours they waited; but then the patient's violence diminished. Under large doses of opiates he sank into a sleep that lasted almost eleven hours. He awakened on the morning of March 3 greatly improved.

This was noted as a striking point of difference between the 1788 illness and that of 1801. In the earlier attack, sleep seemed only to lead to an increase in strength for heightened violence. In the present attack a period of calm always followed sleep. The pulse was 84 on awakening on March 3. The King realized that he had been greatly disturbed. He asked where he was, recognizing apparently for the first time that he was not in the room which he and the Queen generally occupied in the Queen's House. When told that he was in Princess Mary's bed, he said that he was sorry that she had been inconvenienced and that he was afraid that he had been ill a long time. That night he slept six and a half hours. Next morning as he was dressing he turned pitifully to Doctor Willis. "Must I put on the waistcoat?" he asked. "I trust in God, Sir," Willis replied, "it will not be necessary."

On the 5th the royal patient was so much improved that the Duke of Kent had breakfast with him and there was talk among the physicians about moving him to Kew. On the morning of the 6th the Queen and the Duke of Cumberland visited him. The effect of Charlotte's visit seemed so favorable that she again saw him in the evening. Early in the day, George III had directed Doctor John Willis to notify Addington, Lord Eldon, and Pitt of his convalescence. When he mentioned Pitt's name, he said, "Tell him I am now quite well—quite recovered from my illness; but what has he not to answer for who is the cause of my having been ill at all?" This verbal message was given to Pitt by Doctor Willis in Addington's presence. Calling upon Addington as witness, Pitt told the medical messenger to deliver to the King his solemn promise that he would never again, whether in or out of office, agitate the Catholic question. At eight-fifteen that evening Doctor Willis dispatched a letter to Pitt in which he said, "I stated to him what you wished, and what I had a good opportunity of doing; and,

after saying the kindest things of you, he exclaimed, 'Now my mind will be at ease!' Upon the Queen's coming in, the first thing he told her was your message, and he made the same observation upon it."

Pitt's prompt and complete capitulation to the King on Catholic Toleration resulted from his great desire to promote his sovereign's recovery as soon as possible. Moreover, he realized that the royal antipathy was so intense that, even should the measure pass both Houses of Parliament, it would certainly be vetoed by the King.\*

On March 7 George had a long talk with his favorite son, the Duke of York, and apologized for not having seen him along with his brothers on the previous day. "I wished to see you alone and for a long time," he said to the Duke. When their talk turned to political matters, George questioned his son particularly about Catholic emancipation and Pitt's resignation. But the Duke, with filial consideration, tried to divert his father. "Sir," he said, "since this point, which has given your Majesty so much uneasiness, is settled, it is better now to forget all that has passed." The monarch yielded; and now his consideration was all for his son. "Frederick," he said, "you are more nervous than I am; I really feel quite well, and I know full well how ill I have been." "We have only one fear," replied the Duke, "that you will not take care of yourself." "I will," George assured him, "you may depend upon it. I have, I fear, neglected this too much, and presumed a great deal more than I ought on my constitution. Be assured I will be more careful for the future."

The interview left him feeling calm and assured, and during the evening he played piquet and backgammon. Two days later, he sent for Pitt. Pitt, however, declined to come, feeling that Addington, as the new Prime Minister, should see the King before he did. The final bulletin was issued on the 11th: "His Majesty is perfectly free from fever, but it may require some time, as is always necessary after so severe an illness, to complete his recovery." As a matter of fact, sleep was still very uncertain. The King saw Mr. Addington and Lord Eldon on the 11th and gave orders that the government be completed. He also saw the Prince of Wales. Much to that gentleman's annoyance, Doctor John Willis insisted on chaperoning him throughout the visit.

The conference at which Pitt was to resign his seals of office had

\*It is interesting to note that, although George III wanted his right to veto legislation recognized, he never once employed it. He preferred the use of bribery, removal from office, and threats of abdication to gain his ends.

been dreaded equally in anticipation by both participants. But when it took place on March 14 it went off quite smoothly. The King treated his great minister with the utmost graciousness, inviting him to visit him as a friend whenever he should feel it proper to do so. He remarked that no one could question the propriety of such a visit at Weymouth during the coming summer. King George even concerned himself about the straitened circumstances in which Pitt would find himself on resigning his office. He later attempted to present him anonymously through Rose with the sum of £30,000. This Pitt promptly refused.

As soon as it became known that Pitt had given the King his assurance that he would not again propose Catholic Toleration, there developed a strong movement among his partisans to keep him in office. Although the new Ministry had been conceived, the arrangements had not been perfected when the illness began. Since the appointments had not been gazetted, Pitt and his Cabinet were still the *de facto* ministers. Addington had openly stated that he had not wanted to head the new Ministry and that he had unwillingly yielded to the royal importunity. On accepting office, he had assured Pitt that he regarded himself merely as a *locum tenens* for him. In such circumstances Pitt's retention in office seemed entirely logical. Rose had noted in his journal, on March 6, the day on which Pitt communicated to George III his complacency on the Catholic issue, "Mr. Pitt seems to admit more than he has at all heretofore done, the possibility of its being right that he should remain, or rather return to his situation; in which possible case it would become necessary to dispose honourably and advantageously of Mr. Addington."

But the new Premier was now loath to give up his high place. His previous noble avowals had no more stability than the customary promises of politicians before gaining office. He had begun to taste the intoxicating adulation of sycophants, and was much too vain to want the world to think of him as only a substitute minister. When it was suggested that he give way, he said that he would leave the matter up to Pitt, and that if Pitt wished to approach the King on the problem he might do so. He repeated the declaration that the King had made to him early in February:—"Lay your hand upon your heart and ask yourself where I am to turn for support if you do not stand by me," and observed that the mere suggestion of Pitt's resumption of office might upset his Majesty's precariously recovered mental balance. This



was a thrust that found Pitt's vulnerable spot; he would not force the King into a dilemma that might disturb him. In truth, if George III had had to choose between Pitt and Addington at this juncture, he might well have suffered a serious relapse. He had the naïve theory that he, Addington, and Pitt could all three work together in perfect union. At one of the levees early in the spring of 1801 he drew the two men into a windowed recess and said, "If we three do but keep together all will do well."

The royal family failed to be torn by discord during the 1801 illness, largely because of its short duration and the impotent state of the Opposition party. The Prince of Wales again lacked the decency even to feign any concern over his father's condition. At a large affair given by Lady Hamilton on the night of February 22, the Prince was overheard loudly exclaiming to the former minister from France, "*Savez vous, Monsieur de Calonne, que mon père est aussi fou que jamais?*" The King's third son, William, the Duke of Clarence, also showed a total disregard of conventional sensibilities during the illness. He went about amusing the curious with tales of his father's madness, his brutality to pages, and his efforts to run away from his keepers. Meeting Lord Cholmondeley on the street during the height of the illness, the Duke gleefully exclaimed, "We shall have it our own way now. He is not only mad but dying and I know my brother intends to give you the white stick." But the Duke of York, who was no longer under the domination of the Prince of Wales, behaved admirably.

Although the period of pronounced abnormality was very brief, the convalescence was as long-drawn-out in the 1801 illness as in that of 1788 and 1789. It was far less smooth and steadily progressive than in the previous illness. Doubtless Addington's replacement of Pitt was partially responsible. The government was new and Addington did not have Pitt's masterful sway. Many problems had to be brought to the sovereign, so that the degree of insulation he had enjoyed with Pitt at the helm was not approached under Addington.

Just before he resigned the Treasury Seals on March 14, Pitt congratulated the Reverend Thomas Willis on the brevity of the King's illness. Willis replied, with the vainglorious assurance of all the Willises, that if his family had been summoned earlier in the 1788 illness, that would have been shorter too.

The King recalled that March 12 had been the day on which he had

been first permitted to sign warrants on his recovery in 1789. Now, twelve years later, he took childish pleasure in predating the warrants which he signed on the 13th and 14th to March 12, 1801. During the middle of March there were frequent conferences with the members of the new Ministry, at some of which he appeared elated and at others quite low-spirited. Toward Addington he was at times almost effusive. "The King," he wrote him on March 15, "cannot find words sufficiently expressive of his Majesty's cordial approbation of the whole arrangements which *his own Chancellor of the Exchequer* has wisely, and his Majesty chooses to add, most correctly recommended." But there were other times when his attitude was quite different. Once when Addington was only a few minutes late for his appointment, George III flew into a fury which alarmed everyone.

During the last ten days of March official activities had to be greatly curtailed. Rose recorded that on the 28th the King had eight hundred unsigned warrants and that none had been returned recently. Lord Eldon told Mr. Rose confidentially on April 5 that he did not yet consider the King sound enough in mind to present him with the Great Seal of the Chancellorship, and that Lord Loughborough should not have permitted George III to sign warrants on April 2 and on the two previous occasions.

Charles Fox, who had almost entirely given up his activity in the House of Commons, wrote on April 9 from his rural retreat, where the news of the world hunted him out, ". . . all the letters from London agree in representing the King as very ill, and wholly incapable of business. It is said Lord Eldon declared he must have a quarter of an hour's conversation with him before he took the great seal, but no fit quarter of an hour has been found. I think his not having been well enough to appear at any church or chapel on Easter Sunday is a very strong circumstance; nor is it clear that anyone except his keepers has seen him lately." Glenbervie reports that at this time the King wanted to talk incessantly and when those about him, acting under physicians' orders, declined to answer him, he burst into tears.

On April 12 he had a lengthy conference with Addington and then a two-hour discussion of military affairs with the Duke of York. The Queen dined with him and in the evening the Princesses joined them. Whenever a good day came, activities were crowded into it in order to impress the nation favorably. On the following day there came the expected reaction. But he attended the Privy Council meeting on the

14th and presented Lord Eldon with the Great Seal of the Chancellorship. He looked very pale and his behavior at the ceremony strongly bespoke persisting morbidity. According to Lord Carlisle, "... his manner of giving the Great Seal was a mixture of neat compliment and wandering mind. He took the seals out of his purse and held them to his bosom. When he gave Lord Eldon the purse, he thought he was made Lord Chancellor. But the King burst out in laughter and said, 'You have got the purse and that's all.' Lord Eldon looked dismayed." Then the King "... took the seals from his bosom and said, 'These as I hid them I give you from my heart.'" Lord Eldon was taken aback by this performance and felt that Addington had misinformed him as to the King's real condition. In consequence, he regarded his tenure of the Chancellorship as conditional upon the King's complete recovery and did not resign his former position as Chief Justice of the Common Pleas until May 21.

On April 15 there was a disquieting interview with the Prince of Wales, which the Prince reported in detail to Lord Carlisle and which Carlisle recorded in his journal. It describes how, after an interval of nearly a month, the Prince was admitted to his father's presence. "The King said he was happy he could embrace his son and dismiss Doctor Willis's keepers, that day being the first his own servants could attend him." The journal reports that the King talked of himself as a dying man, determined to end his days in Hanover while his first-born son took over the government. "He insisted much on the Prince accepting a white Hanoverian horse," wrote Carlisle, "laying most vehement stress upon the Prince of Wales' exclusive right to mount such a horse, his joy, his pride—and this went to very incorrect discourse."

The Prince had left Lord Carlisle with the impression that George III's behavior was far from normal. "He turned quick to the most violent accusations of Mr. Pitt, detailed methodically a variety of instances of his insolent conduct, warned the Prince against his ambition, and concluded by saying, 'Of a bad set, Lord Granville was the honestest.' He then ran off, and talked of the device he used, by some position of his wig, to make the Council believe him in better looks and health than he was. He was very wild."

In high glee George informed his son of how he had fooled Lord Eldon with the hidden seals. Then he drew the Prince into the room where he had been confined and tears came to his eyes as he told of his harsh treatment at the hands of the Willises. He made the Prince

stay to dinner and the visit ended by the King's drinking three toasts to his son's health.

On the day after this meeting with his father, the Prince sent for Lord Chancellor Eldon to confer with him. He reported George III's desire to hand the government over to him and asked Eldon to consider the proper mode of carrying out his father's wishes. Conferences were held with Pitt and Addington; and the whole scheme was promptly aborted.

It was decided to move the King from the Queen's House in London to Kew, on April 20. To the uninformed world, this was thought to be an index of improvement, but the real purpose of the move was to secure more isolation for the royal patient. After the arrival at Kew he was so disturbed that he had to be kept in a separate house from the Queen and the Princesses. This upset him greatly and he told Lord Eldon that he refused to transact any business of state until the order of the physicians was countermanded. The Lord Chancellor finally persuaded the Willises to yield on this point, but they continued to exercise control of their patient for some time. According to Charles Fox, Willis' trained attendants, who had been dispensed with, had to be recalled on April 22.

During the 1801 attack, the King's amorous aberrations, which in the 1788 illness had been centered on Lady Elizabeth Pembroke, fastened on his niece, Caroline, the discarded wife of the Prince of Wales. George III told Lord Uxbridge that thoughts of Princess Caroline had obsessed him throughout the illness, and that he was determined to see her the first time he was out. Accordingly, early in May, as soon as he was permitted to leave the Palace at Kew, he made a sudden dash over Westminster Bridge to Blackheath without telling any one where he was going. When he arrived at Caroline's home, she was still in bed, but she hastened to receive him in her gown and nightcap.

During this period of convalescence the King's passion for Caroline, unlike his unrestrained love for Elizabeth Pembroke, was sublimated into an urge to act as her knight and to fight for her against the Prince, his son. The chief disputes between the Prince and the Princess were over the custody of their charming five-year-old daughter, Charlotte, the heir-apparent to the throne of England. The King's plans for interference became a painful problem for the family and formed the subject of an urgent letter from the Princess Elizabeth to the Reverend

Thomas Willis. ". . . I am commanded by the Queen," she wrote, "to inform you by letter how much this subject of the Princess is still on the King's mind to a degree that is distressing, from the unfortunate situation of the family; and Mama is of opinion that the Lord Chancellor should be informed of it, as he mentioned the subject to Mr. Dundas today. The Queen commands me to add that if you could see her heart, you would see that she is guided by every principle of justice and with a most fervent wish that the dear King may do nothing to form a breach between him and the Prince; for she really lives in dread of it; for from the moment my brother comes into the room, till the instant he quits it there is nothing that is not kind that the King does not do by him. This is so different to his manner when well, and his ideas concerning the child Princess Charlotte so extraordinary, that to own you the truth, I am not astonished at Mama's uneasiness. She took courage and told the King that now my Brother was quiet he had better leave him so, as he had never forbid the Princess seeing the child, when she pleased, to which he answered, 'That does not signify the Princess shall have her child, and I will speak to Mr. Wyatt about the building of the wing to her present house.' You know full well how speedily everything is now ordered and done."

The patient was now becoming very difficult to control. George III had resented the presence of the Willis family from the outset. And when convalescence set in, resentment developed into rebellion. The new Lord Chancellor, Lord Eldon, a man of ability and character who was as reactionary as the King himself and just as stubbornly opposed to Catholic Toleration, had at this period more influence with the patient than any one else. Unfortunately, Pitt was in retirement and Addington was too weak a personality to carry any weight. The general practitioners on the staff seem to have resigned control to the Willises during this phase of the convalescence. Old Doctor Willis himself was very inactive in the case and his sons lacked his power of domination; so that they, in turn, were forced to employ Lord Eldon as an intermediary. Orders were given to him and he relayed them to his Majesty. There are a number of letters clearly showing Eldon's role in the King's management at this time.

"We have not seen the King better than this morning," Doctor John Willis wrote the Lord Chancellor on May 16. "Your Lordship's conversations with his Majesty have not hitherto produced all the effects we wish. He seems rather to select and turn any part to his purpose,

than to his good. The Council, he tells us, you propose to be in London. Of course, we wish much that your Lordship should see the King again soon—that every means possible should be used to reconcile his Majesty to the present control. For, till a consciousness of the necessity of temperance arises in his own mind, it is absolutely necessary to have resort to artificial prudence.” On May 25 the Reverend Doctor Francis Willis wrote Eldon, “This morning I walked with his Majesty, who was in a perfectly composed and quiet state. He told me, with great seeming satisfaction, that he had a most charming night, ‘but one sleep from eleven to half after four’; when, alas! he had but three hours’ sleep in the Night, which, upon the whole, was passed in restlessness, in getting out of bed, opening the shutters, in praying at times, violently, and in making such remarks as betray a consciousness in him of his own situation, but which are evidently made for the purpose of concealing it from the Queen. He frequently called out, ‘I am now perfectly well, and my Queen, my Queen has saved me!’ Whilst I state these particulars to your Lordship, I must beg to remind you how much afraid the Queen is, lest she should be committed to him; for the King has sworn he will never forgive her if she relates anything that passes in the night. . . .

“It is too evident, My Lord, that it cannot be proper, since it cannot be safe, for the King to go to Weymouth so soon as he intends. Your Lordship will therefore, no doubt, think it requisite to take steps to prevent it as soon as possible.”

Lord Eldon brought to this difficult assignment a wealth of sagacious cunning. “The Lord Chancellor,” he wrote to the King, “offering his most humble duty to your Majesty, presumes to submit to your Majesty’s Most gracious consideration, that it appears to him that great difficulties may arise in matters of public concern, if your Majesty should be pleased, during the time of the sitting of Parliament, which he conceives cannot be long, to remove any considerable distance from Parliament. It cannot but happen that before Parliament can be closed, some intelligence should be absolutely necessary to learn promptly, and perhaps instantly, your Majesty’s pleasure, and to learn it by communications more ample than your Majesty could possibly allow to your servants, if they were not personally attending, in the discharge of their duty, upon your Majesty.” The opening lines of the King’s reply on May 31 show that he rose to the bait. He began, “The King cannot allow any difficulty to stand in the way of his doing what may

be most useful to the public service. He will therefore postpone his journey to Weymouth till the close of the session of Parliament."

By June 1 the King considered himself almost fully recovered. On his birthday on June 4 he held a levee at St. James's where he received the congratulations of the foreign ministers and the leading Englishmen, and later he presided at a meeting of the Privy Council. At this time he resumed his correspondence with the Bishop of Worcester. "... After a most tedious and severe illness," he wrote, "from which, by the interposition of Divine Providence, I have most wonderfully escaped the jaws of death, I find myself enabled to pursue one of my most agreeable occupations, that of writing to you who have never been in the most gloomy moments out of my thoughts. I can now assure you that my health is daily improving, though I cannot boast of the same strength and spirits I enjoyed before. Still, with quiet and sea bathing, I trust they will soon be regained. Public events in every part of the globe appear more favorable, and the hand of Divine Providence seems stretched forth to protect this favoured island, which alone has stood forth constantly in opposition to our wicked neighbours. I flatter myself, the fact of having a Ministry composed of men of religion and great probity will tend to the restoration of more decorum. Neither my advice nor example will be wanted to effect it." He closed the letter with an account of his plan to receive the Holy Communion with four of his sons; the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence, the two bad boys, were not to participate.

Preparations were now begun at Weymouth to receive the King. Apparently, hydrotherapy was being utilized more than in the illness of 1788, since a physician preceded the royal family to Weymouth and supervised the installation of hot and cold baths. Despite the congratulations on his recovery, the King was far from well during June.

In a letter to the Reverend Thomas Willis on June 9, the Princess Elizabeth wrote, "He has been very quiet, very heavy and very sleepy, all the evening, and has said two or three times yesterday was too much for him." Three days later she wrote, "I have the pleasure of saying, yesterday was a very good day, though the sleepiness continues to a great degree. I am told the night was tolerable, but he has got up in his usual way, which is very vexatious." In all probability, he had been given large quantities of opiates to quiet him. On the 16th the Reverend Thomas Willis wrote the Lord Chancellor, "I have nothing to say that

is in truth very favourable. His Majesty rode out this morning at ten o'clock and did not return till four. He paid a visit in the course of the day to Mr. Dundas (at Wimbledon). His attendants thought him much hurried and so think his pages. He has a great thirst upon him and his family are in great fear.

"His Majesty still talks much of prudence, but shows none. His body, mind, and tongue are all upon the stretch every minute, and the manner in which he is now expending money in various ways, which is so unlike him when well all evince that he is not so right as he should be."

Although George III seemed willing to accept Lord Eldon's suggestions, he absolutely refused to allow Doctor Robert Willis to continue attending him. "The King," he wrote on June 21, "cannot but in the strongest manner decline having Doctor Robert Willis about him. The line of practice followed with great credit by that gentleman, renders it incompatible with the King's feelings that he should—now by the goodness of Divine Providence restored to reason—consult a person of that description. His Majesty is perfectly satisfied with the zeal and attention of Doctor Gisborne, in whose absence he will consult Sir Francis Milman, but cannot bear consulting any of the Willis family, though he will ever respect the character and conduct of Doctor Robert Willis. No person that ever has had a nervous fever can bear to continue the physician employed on the occasion; and this holds much more so in the calamitous one that has so long confined the King, but of which he is now completely recovered." Doctor John Willis appears to have given up his attendance on the King about June 1. The Reverend Thomas Willis soon thereafter moved from Kew to Kew Green, where he remained for a time in order to be quickly accessible for written or verbal consultation with the general physicians and the members of the household.

The royal family finally set out for Weymouth on June 29. They broke the journey by staying at Mr. Rose's estate, "Cuffnells," on the edge of the New Forest, until July 3. On July 1 the King's host wrote a long letter to the Chancellor describing his condition. It seems that the King was very difficult to deal with. "Unfortunately," Mr. Rose wrote, "a heavy shower fell while his Majesty was on the road, about a mile and a half short of this place. No entreaties could prevail with him to put on a greatcoat, and he was wet through before he reached the Town Hall, where he remained about three quarters of an hour, speaking to the Mayor and several gentlemen. He then went to Sir



Harry Neale's, and dined without changing his clothes; then rode back here and was again wet. . . . His Majesty intends going to Southampton—ten miles—on horseback today and returning to dinner." On the same day George III dispatched a note to Lord Eldon informing him that he ". . . continues daily improving in strength, that his sleep now is very refreshing. . . . Medicine is now, by the advice of Doctor Gisborne, entirely laid aside."

But at Weymouth improvement was steadily progressive. The patient became more heedful of the fact that he was not yet well. On July 8 he mentioned in a letter to Addington that he had broken his key to the War Office dispatch box, adding, "Even the event of the breaking the key gave more uneasiness than it ought." Lord Loughborough visited him at Weymouth and sent back a good report. His account indicated that after the attack of manic excitement subsided there followed the contrary phase of mild depression. The King stayed much later than usual at Weymouth, hoping to regain his health as fully as possible before Parliament opened.

On October 24, shortly after his return to London, he wrote the Bishop of Worcester: "Sea-bathing has had its usual success with me, and in truth it was never more necessary, for the severe fever I had the last winter left many unpleasant sensations. These, I have every reason to say, by the blessing of the Almighty, are nearly removed. I am forced to be very careful, and to avoid everything of fatigue, either of mind or body, but I feel I am gradually gaining ground. The next week will be rather harassing, as I must open the Session of Parliament, and attend the ceremonies in consequence; but I shall return every day to Kew, that I may be more quiet."

His dejection of spirits persisted for some time. The Earl of Malmesbury spent two days with the royal family late in November. Apparently, recovery from the depressed phase was then still only partial. George III's energy and spirits had not risen quite to their normal levels. "I had not seen his Majesty since the end of October, 1800," Malmesbury wrote; "of course not since his last illness. He appeared rather more of an old man, but not older than men at his age commonly appear. He stooped rather more, and was apparently less firm on his legs, but he did not look thinner, nor were there any marks of sickness or decline in his countenance or manner. These last were much as usual, somewhat less hurried and more conversable; that is to say, allowing the person to whom he addressed himself more time to answer

and talk than he used to do when discoursing on common subjects, on public and grave ones."

Malmesbury's account also describes how George III expressed himself on the importance of facing issues squarely with equanimity. "Lord Malmesbury," the King said, "you and I have lived on the active theatre of this world these thirty years. If we are not become wise enough to consider every event which happens, quietly and with acquiescence, we have lived very negligently." Sadly enough, the poor man was ill equipped to abide by his own sound philosophy. Could he only have done so, the psychosis of 1804 and the final tragic disorder might never have occurred.

## CHAPTER XXII



*"He was the world's first gentleman  
And made the appellation hideous."*

WHEN HENRY ADDINGTON was presented with the Seals of the Treasury in March, 1801, one of his erstwhile colleagues in the House of Commons had "such a fit of laughter that he laughed the whole way from the Horse Guards to the Stable Yard, and was obliged to sit down on a bench in the park to rest." For Addington was a small man, and contrasted with his predecessor Pitt, appeared even smaller. As George Canning put it,

Pitt is to Addington  
As London is to Paddington.

But King George regarded his new minister as his own personal deliverer from evil forces. As Addington accepted the Seals, the King embraced him dramatically and cried, "You have saved me!" He was convinced that, but for Addington, he would have had to violate his conscience and give in to Pitt on the Catholic issue. His gratitude knew no bounds. Early in June, when he was still displaying the inordinate liberality which was a symptom of his illness, he presented Addington with the Royal Lodge in Richmond Park for life, and had the entire place rebuilt for him.\* On June 14 he wrote to his minister, "The King is highly gratified at the repeated marks of sensibility of Mr. Addington's heart, which must greatly add to the comfort of having placed him with so much propriety at the head of the Treasury. He trusts their mutual affection can only cease with their lives."

The King's attitude toward Addington was quite different from that which he had shown toward any of his former First Ministers. There had been only two others with whom George III had been even re-

\*Canning satirically designated this abode the "Villa Medici," alluding to Addington's nickname, "The Doctor."

motely intimate—Bute and North. With youthful ardor he had looked up to Bute as a wise and nobly superior being. North he had treated with the alternate forbearance and intolerance which one shows to an indolent cousin. There was no one with whom George III felt more comfortable than he did with Addington, who was not self-righteous like Bute, stubborn like Grenville, quick-witted and irresolute like North, nor brilliant and complex like Pitt. Fox had said that Addington's only virtues were "simplicity and consistency." To Fox these characteristics spelled mediocrity and he hated mediocrity. But such was not the case with George III. He liked mediocre men; only among them did he feel personally secure. His attitude toward Addington was almost one of familiarity. To be sure, it was never the easy give-and-take that exists between equals, but rather the formal intimacy that a man in a superior position accords a trusted servant. By dining *tête-à-tête* with Addington, the sovereign relaxed his peculiar code of court etiquette to an extent that he had not done in four decades.

And so the administration progressed smoothly. Soon after the King's return from Weymouth in October, 1801, preliminary negotiations for peace with France were concluded. Pitt had suggested to the government the terms that England should seek, and when the treaty was submitted to Parliament he supported it with all his power. Addington was elated, but George III could not share his minister's "childish exultation and joy" over what he described as "an experimental peace." The King said that he felt no trust in "the assurances of those who set every religious word and social principle at naught." Nevertheless, England was finally at peace, and in consequence "Doctor" Addington and good King George became very popular. The mass of the people were delighted to have their soldiers home again. And the men in the City were exultant over the repeal of Pitt's income tax, which had been intended to function only while the war lasted.

For more than a year tranquillity prevailed. Pitt was zealously supporting the administration. Fox and Sheridan were the only leaders in opposition and, without the support of Pitt and Grenville, they were impotent. It was not until the fall of 1802, when gathering war clouds portrayed the hollowness of Napoleon's designs for peace, that the country grew restive. Oblivious of the fact that William Pitt was not, like his father, a great war minister, the cry that he resume power grew constantly louder. It was not that Addington had actively bungled things; but he had done little to dissipate the mistrust of his abilities

which had been general when he took office. He would have had to perform miracles to have the political leaders cheerfully entrust him with the guidance of the nation at a critical period. And miracles were hardly Addington's forte. He was, moreover, guilty of nepotism, which made him vulnerable to the shafts of the lampooners. He had appointed his brother, Hiley, Joint Paymaster and his brother-in-law, Bragge Bathurst, Secretary at War—and again Canning scored him:

How blest, how firm the Statesman stands  
 (Him no low intrigue can move)  
 Circled by faithful kindred bands,  
 And propped by fond fraternal love.  
 When his speeches hobble vilely  
 What "Hear him's" burst from Brother Hiley;  
 When his faltering periods lag,  
 Hark to the cheers of Brother Bragge

. . . . .

Each a gentleman at large,  
 Lodged and fed at public charge,  
 Paying (with a grace to charm ye)  
 This the Fleet, and that the Army.

On May 16, 1803, the day that war with France became inevitable, Addington startled the House by appearing before it in the full dress of the Windsor uniform. Sheridan referred to him as "a sheep in wolf's clothing," and the House was convulsed with laughter. Somehow the minister lacked the dignity necessary to carry through an historic moment. And a few days later his inadequacy became even more obvious when Pitt, who had thus far kept himself in the background of the Addington regime, appeared before the House and gave one of the greatest speeches of his life in support of the war. He was cheered before he started and when he was through "never was any speech so cheered, or such incessant and loud applause." On the following day Fox made one of his most brilliant efforts. He spoke against the war for three hours and held the House spellbound by his "art, eloquence, wit, and mischief." Compared with such mastery, Addington's faltering words made him appear woefully small.

Although George III could not have been unaware of the decreasing popularity of his government, it seemed to cause him no great concern. He had enjoyed unusually good health for more than two years, and

seemed to be poised in a state of serenity, midway between depression and elation, from which no external events could move him. The discovery of a desperate plot by a Colonel Despard to kill him on his way to Parliament left him apparently unmoved. Even the French occupation of Hanover, his ancestral home, seemed to have little effect on him except to provoke his regret that it had come just after he had spent £50,000 to rehabilitate the electoral palace for his son, the Duke of Cambridge, whom he had appointed Viceroy. However, as the year 1803 drew to a close there developed a constellation of events that conspired to rob the King of his mental health.

Before the winter of 1803 had set in, Napoleon had concentrated an army of more than one hundred thousand men on the shores of the English Channel across from Kent. The French channel ports were choked with ships waiting for the signal to transport the invaders. The English were electrified with excitement. All along the southern coast vigilant eyes were continually scanning the horizon, ready to send to London news of "Boney's" approach. It was to be by a system of semaphores known as the "Aerial Telegraph" if he came by day, and by a relay of beacon flashes if he should come at night. False alarms from the overanxious kept tension near the bursting point. Loyalty blazed forth into a great flame.

Every one was aroused. The Volunteer and Yeomanry corps of England totalled more than three hundred and fifty thousand men. Pitt, as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, was in a position of great prominence. He carried out his task as the commander of three thousand volunteers with his customary thoroughness and efficiency.\* On October 26, George III with his seven sons took the salute of twelve thousand men of the Volunteer Corps of London in Hyde Park. A crowd of two hundred thousand cheered both the corps of volunteers and their brave and loyal old sovereign. Two days later the King reviewed fifteen thousand volunteers from Westminster, Lambeth, and Southwark. He was in a whirl of constant activity. Recognized as a man of great personal courage himself, he was admirably equipped to exhort the citizenry to do its duty.

On November 30 he wrote to his old friend, Bishop Hurd of Worcester, to arrange a refuge for the female members of his family should the "Corsican Adventurer" be lucky enough to land his troops. "We are here in daily expectation that Bonaparte will attempt his threatened

\*Appendix.

invasion," he said, "but the chances against his success seem so many that it is wonderful he persists in it. I own I place that thorough dependence on the protection of Divine Providence, that I cannot help thinking the usurper is encouraged to make the trial that his ill-success may put an end to his wicked purposes. Should his troops effect a landing I shall surely put myself at the head of mine, and my other armed subjects to repel them; but as it is impossible to foresee the events of such a conflict, should the enemy approach too near to Windsor, I shall think it right the Queen and my daughters should cross the Severn, and shall send them to your Episcopal Palace at Worcester. By this hint I do not in the least mean they shall be any inconvenience to you and shall send a proper servant and furniture for their accommodation."

A thousand urgent details claimed the King's attention and fired his restless mind. He was busy arranging for the command of the army, the hiding of the money kept in the Bank of England, the closing of the Stock Exchange, the dissemination of news. Every day, it seemed, there were new divisions of troops to review. George threw himself into the activities with an ardor that threatened his equanimity of the preceding two years.

And while national preoccupations engaged his newly stimulated energies, family affairs once more obtruded themselves. The Prince of Wales had always been a source of worry to his father. Even when he was a small child, he was impossible to control. He had violent temper tantrums and rebelled against all attempts at discipline. By the time he was fourteen, his insubordination had become a court scandal. During that year Horace Walpole remarked to Lord Hertford after one of the King's levees that their sovereign "was much fallen away and looked very ill." "Nobody can tell what he has suffered for six weeks," Hertford responded. "But think what he must feel at finding already that his son is so headstrong that he has not the least authority over him."

As the Prince of Wales grew up, his unpleasant qualities took on an abnormal taint. Heartless and cowardly, selfish and extravagant, vain, dishonest and weak—he was undoubtedly a psychopath. The cruelty which as a child he showed by his delight in torturing animals manifested itself later in his utter disregard of all human feelings save his own. The temper tantrums of his infancy persisted throughout his life; he was always prone to tears when they served his purposes. As a young

man he is said to have burst into violent weeping when Beau Brummel criticized the cut of his waistcoat.

In all his affairs with women there was a kind of shoddy drama. When the lovely Catholic widow, Maria Fitzherbert, rejected his first impassioned plea of marriage, he scratched his wrists and writhed about the floor. And after he did succeed in winning her to a morganatic marriage, he treated her with heartless unconcern. Nor did his succession of mistresses fare better. His taste in women was voracious and he had a particular penchant for those older than himself. Thirteen years after his marriage with Mrs. Fitzherbert, Lady Jersey, his mistress of the moment, broke off her liaison with him. Again the Prince wept and moaned and behaved with such utter lack of self-control that word went to the royal Princesses that their brother's death was imminent. The decorous Queen of England was so upset that she wrote to Mrs. Fitzherbert, begging her to console her son.

And coupled with his own licentiousness, there was a pious concern for the morals of other members of his family. When Augustus brought his wife to England, Prince George, morganatic husband of a Catholic widow, forbade his brother to sleep under the same roof with her because she did not come within the definition of a royal wife given in the Marriage Act. Indeed, he was a consummate hypocrite and in all things great and small he treated the truth lightly. He did not hesitate to write to his close friend, Charles Fox, four days before his morganatic marriage to Mrs. Fitzherbert, which was then already planned, that such a marriage was his farthestmost thought.

He was devoid of all principle in money matters. It was his habit to borrow the largest sums possible from friends who did not dare to demand repayment. When these sources were exhausted he turned to the professional money-lenders, agreeing to pay them back with 300 per cent interest when he got the Crown. He could not or would not economize. In 1793, when he "roughed it" with his regiment on the Sussex Coast, it was in a special silk tent costing four thousand pounds.

There was a stench about even his horse racing. His famous horse, Escape, ridden by Chiffney, lost by several lengths at Newmarket when the odds were only two to one. But on the following day, with the odds at five to one and with practically the same horses in the field, Escape won easily. The Prince did not bet on him when he lost, but backed him heavily when he won. In consequence, the stewards of Newmarket



did not welcome the colors of the Prince of Wales for many years.

All in all, it is not a pretty picture—a Prince so ruthless in his behavior to others that his only child, Princess Charlotte, feared him so that she turned pale and stuttered\* whenever he approached her; and at the same time so weak and cowardly that he could bear no pain nor discomfort himself, and found his own release and escape through excessive drinking and even through addiction to ether and paregoric. It is really very difficult to find redeeming features in this son of George III. He was handsome until he grew obese. He was not unintelligent and he had the sort of charm that badly spoiled individuals sometimes possess. He was reputed to have had exquisite social manners but they were somewhat inconstant. A brilliant caricature of the Prince was drawn in a four line squib:

A noble nasty course he ran,  
Superbly filthy and fastidious.  
He was the world's first gentleman  
And made the appellation hideous.†

The Prince of Wales' activities during 1803 were peculiarly provoking. He started the year with another application for funds to pay his debts. Addington proved easier to deal with than his predecessor, and agreed to allow the Prince an extra £60,000 annually for three years. It was hoped, but by no one expected, that young George would then be able to live within his income. From July to October there was an interchange of twenty letters between the Prince, the King, the Duke of York and Henry Addington on the subject of the Prince's military rank. The Prince's letters were ably written; most of them were from the pen of Sir Philip Francis. Appeals for promotion were first made to Addington, since it was thought that he would be far more amenable than the King. Addington, apparently unaware of the Prince's earlier requests to his father to give him a higher rank in the army, sent a first reply that was encouraging. His second was much less so.

"His Majesty," it said, "on being informed of the sentiments and wishes of the Prince of Wales, applauded, in the strongest manner, the feeling by which his Royal Highness is actuated, but referred nevertheless, to the answers which his Majesty had judged it necessary to return to similar representations." This did not satisfy the Prince. He

\*The Prince himself stuttered badly at times.

†Appendix.

continued appealing to Addington, who replied with a letter which ended: "The King's opinion being fixed, he desired no further mention should be made to him upon the subject." Then the Prince wrote directly to the King. George III's reply was kindly but firm: "Though I applaud your zeal and spirit, of which, I trust no one can suppose any of my family wanting, yet, considering the repeated declamations I have made of my determination on your former applications to the same purpose, I had flattered myself to have heard no further on the subject. Should the Implacable Enemy so far succeed as to land, you will have an opportunity of showing your zeal at the head of your regiment. It will be the duty of every man to stand forth on such an occasion; and I shall certainly think it mine to set an example in defence of everything that is dear to me and to my people. I ever remain, my dear son, Your most affectionate Father."

The Prince then turned to his brother, the Duke of York, asking why he alone among the males of the royal family should be discriminated against. At first the Duke tried to assuage his eldest brother, reminding him that as early as 1795 their father had "declared what his sentiments were, with respect to a Prince of Wales entering into the Army, and the public grounds upon which he never could admit of your being promoted in the service." He pointed out that the King's objections were not personal, and "no slur on your Character as an Officer." But the Prince refused to be comforted, and denied that his father had ever expressed himself to that effect.

York became annoyed. He suggested that the Prince wanted the post for political rather than for military purposes. And though the Prince flared up at this implication, it was probably the true basis of George III's objection to an army promotion for the Prince. The first two Georges had carried out the same policy in regard to the heirs to the throne. In each case the Prince of Wales had been a leader of the Opposition and it was entirely logical for the ruler not to desire to increase the strength of the Opposition by giving it important army representation.\* George III is not the only king who has been eager to avoid the formation of serious nuclei of opposition in his army.

The Prince then vented his spleen on Addington, accusing the

\*When the French threatened to invade England in 1759, George III, then the Prince of Wales, asked his grandfather to put him in command of the defending forces. In his letter he asked for an "opportunity of convincing the world that I am neither unworthy of my high station, nor the blood that fills my veins." George II refused the request.

minister of having let him down. "The Doctor as usual," wrote Lord Gower, "took fright, and he and Lord Hawkesbury have written (this is a great secret) a very humble letter to the Prince, assuring him that so far from advising the King on this subject they did not even know of the letters that had pass'd between him and the King, and that they thought this threat so harsh a measure that if the Prince wish'd it they would resign their places. . . ." But the Prince did not want that. He knew that if Addington went out, Pitt would step in; and he feared and hated Pitt beyond all other ministers.

The Prince of Wales then resorted to a course of action that was indefensible.\* On December 7, against the advice of his counsellors, he published his private correspondence with his father in the leading Opposition daily, the *Morning Chronicle*. This was a foul blow that staggered the aging King and one that he never forgot. He was accustomed to his son's rebellious spirit, to his cynical disaffection and disloyalty. But this particular stab in the back was of the sort to disturb the King's precarious mental balance. Certainly George III had no reason to be ashamed of his letters to the Prince. But that they should be reproduced in a hostile journal for all the world to see was a violation of his privacy that he could not tolerate. He refused either to see his son or to correspond with him. As late as July, 1804, he wrote to Lord Eldon, "It will require some reflection before the King can answer how soon he can receive the publisher of his letters."

As soon as the Prince discovered that the public reaction was strongly against him in this matter, he had MacMahon and several of his other cronies assert that the letters were published without his knowledge. But it was too late. The evidence against him was overwhelming. The damage was irreparably done.

The idea of having to dismiss a Prime Minister toward whom he had feelings of loyalty and affection was also very upsetting to George III at this time. It had proved to be so in the case of the Earl of Bute in 1765 and again with Pitt in 1801. In both instances, it was chiefly responsible for precipitating an attack of mental disorder. George III was so fundamentally conservative that he feared change of any kind.

\*The only thing which can be said in exculpation is that the Prince, by publishing his father's letters, was following the family tradition. His grandfather, Frederick Louis, after being expelled with his family in 1737 from St. James's by the irate George II, published his letters to his father. And his great-grandfather had followed a similar course during his quarrel with his father, George I, in 1717.

Even when existing conditions were bad, he was afraid that a change might stir up the goblins of the future. Within a year after Addington came into office it was apparent that his Ministry could not be long-lived, and it was just as certain that he was to be succeeded by William Pitt. The transition was a painful, faltering process. Early in 1803 Addington himself finally realized that his weak Ministry could not long survive, and he invited Pitt to form a coalition government with him. There were prolonged secret negotiations of which George III was not apprised until their unsuccessful conclusion. The King was greatly angered. Instead of lambasting Addington, who was really responsible for the secrecy, he turned on Pitt. "He desires," declared the King, "to put the Crown in commission—he carries his plan of removals so extremely far and high that it may reach me."

When the 1803 winter session of Parliament opened, Pitt was too busily engaged in directing his body of volunteer coast guards to attend regularly. In November Fox had referred in his letters to the "New Opposition," indicating that Pitt had at that time agreed to join with Fox and Grenville, the leaders of the Opposition. Pitt came to London for a short time in December and in the House attacked the government's defense measures. This was the signal for the united Opposition to get ready to close in on Addington. It was as if a group of lions were stalking a lamb. The prey was there, it was merely a question of when to strike. Just after January 1, 1804, Pitt made another quick trip to London, to confer with Lord Grenville, who was now working actively to perfect the coalition of his forces with Pitt's. George III could no longer escape the fact that Addington, with whom he felt so very comfortable, was to go; in Addington's place he was probably to get Pitt, Grenville, and Fox—a powerful triumvirate with whom he should feel miserably insecure. He would have to beg mercy of them. He feared the haughty and brilliant Pitt; he saw in the offing endless disputes with Grenville, the obstinate son of a stubborn father; and he loathed and distrusted that scoundrel, Charles Fox. He had extremely unhappy memories of the last coalition, of which Fox had been one of the leaders. Then he had been a young, vigorous monarch, but now he was past sixty-five. And the new chains would be stouter than those of the earlier coalition. The combined political forces of Fox, Pitt, and Grenville were far more formidable than those of Fox and North.

The laments and the vacillation of Addington, to whom he could

render no help, became very painful. George III complained to Glenbervie, ". . . that Addington had faltered and wavered about resigning, one day saying he would, and another, that he could not; that he had said to the King that the country could not be saved, but by his continuing in office, and the King replied, 'I am not entirely of that opinion.'"

Shortly after New Year's the King decided to take the bull by the horns—he could not stand the continued suspense. He sent for his loyal servant and friend and, choking with emotion, told him that he ought soon to resign. Deeply hurt, the minister inquired from his Sovereign in what qualities he had been deficient. "It was talents," the King said—and turned away.

## CHAPTER XXIII



*"It is my duty to prevent confusion in my Kingdom,  
and that duty will I perform."*

GEORGE III

GEORGE III'S FOURTH ATTACK of mental disorder began to manifest itself soon after the beginning of the year 1804. The members of the household and the Cabinet were concerned about his condition for more than a month before it was announced to the public, on February 15. Throughout this prolonged 1804 illness, denials and subterfuges were practised. Except for a very brief period, the disorder did not reach the intensity of the illnesses of 1788 and 1801. However, it was marked by short remissions and exacerbations extending over many months, about which the public was almost totally ignorant. Whitbread was not indulging in oratorical license when he said, some years later in Parliament, that during 1804 the King was frequently driven before the public in the morning and restrained in a strait-waistcoat during the afternoon.

The Earl of Malmesbury reported that the illness began on January 12, when the King developed painful joints "after having taken cold by remaining in wet clothes longer than should be." The truth of the matter is that the cold, if it existed at all, did not bring on the psychosis; but the heedlessness which was responsible for the development of the cold was probably an early symptom of the mental disorder. On January 18 the King took a long walk with Addington, who observed that "... his manner was hurried." No doubt their discussion centered about the changes in the Cabinet. That evening, when the King attended the Queen's birthday celebration, Malmesbury observed his behavior. "He was too lame to walk without a cane," he noted, "and his manner struck me as so unusual and incoherent, that I could not help remarking it to Lord Pelham, who the next day (for I went early) told me that he had in consequence of my remark attended to it and it was too plain the King was beginning to be unwell.

Lord Pelham, who played cards that evening with the Queen, added that her anxiety was manifest, since she never kept her eyes off the King during the whole time the party lasted." On the 25th the King attended the meeting of the Privy Council. The Levee and the Drawing Room had, however, to be postponed.

No impressive degree of abnormality was apparent until after February 10. On that day the King rode hard for three hours in the late afternoon and slept very little at night. The next day was Sunday and he made up his loss of sleep by dozing throughout the church service. This mild impropriety might have passed unnoticed were it not so foreign to the King's customary behavior. Devoutly religious as he was, attendance at church was usually a vital experience to him. He prayed intently, he joined full voice in every chant and chorus in the service. To see him nodding in his pew was occasion for real alarm among those who watched over him. They sensed the beginning of a serious disturbance.

Up to this time the King had been attended by general practitioners, chief among whom were Sir Francis Milman and Doctor William Heberden, Jr., but now they became insistent that a specialist in psychiatry be summoned. Because the Willises had been called in during the 1801 attack, contrary to an understanding between the Queen and himself, George III had exacted solemn promises from both Addington and the Queen that that medical family should not be allowed to attend him at any time in the future. There was much discussion among the members of the household and the government as to whether these vows had to be respected. Mrs. Harcourt and other admirers of the Willises felt that the serious condition of the King freed them from the necessity of adhering to their promises. Addington was himself indecisive. The press accused him of being chiefly responsible for preventing the attendance of the Willises, but this he denied, and insisted that he was waiting for the opportune moment to introduce them. He did summon Doctor John Willis and asked him to supervise the care of the King without seeing the patient. But Doctor Willis refused to assume charge of the case under such a condition.\*

\*For some time John Willis remained in the minister's home awaiting the final decision and advising the physicians already in attendance. He strongly advocated controlling the patient through physical restraint rather than by weakening him through repeated bleeding and violent purgation. When the King was inadvertently informed in May that Doctor Willis had for a time been quartered near him and had advised with his physicians, he was furious.

Accordingly Doctor Samuel Foart Simmons, a psychiatrist of the staffs of St. Luke's Hospital and Bedlam, was engaged. Because he was recognized as a specialist in mental disorders, his name was at first not included among those who signed the official medical bulletins. Lord King tried to get the ministers to explain why the bulletins were signed by only four physicians when five were in attendance. But the ministers dodged the issue.

The Marquis of Buckingham leaves no doubt that by February 12 George III was in the beginning of a full-fledged manic attack. He reported that on that day the King arose early and took a two-hour walk. At breakfast, Doctor Simmons made him promise to dine at two, but instead he rode till past five despite the strenuous efforts of his three sons to get him home. At dinner he was very restless, perpetually jumping up from his chair. Later he grew so angry and violent that they endeavored to prevent his evening ride; but this only increased his irritation. Simmons was called and finally succeeded in putting him to bed at half past nine. It was agreed that the royal patient should leave Windsor for London early next morning, but Doctor Simmons could not get the King into his carriage till one. That night in London he talked incessantly for five hours and got no sleep until daybreak; but despite his ceaseless activity, his pulse was not elevated. At noon of the 14th the first official medical bulletin was issued. "His Majesty is much indisposed today," it read. On the following day it was announced that there had been no change.

And now panic and hopelessness gripped the royal family. That they felt themselves incapable of coping with the situation is eloquently attested in a document dated February 15, 1804, and signed by the Queen and all her children residing in England except the two perennial renegades, Prince George and the Duke of Clarence. "We the Queen, and nine of his Majesty's Children," it states, "think it a duty we owe to His Majesty, to our Country, and to ourselves . . . to accept with thanks, the offer which has been made by His Majesty's confidential servants to relieve us from the care and superintendence of His Majesty on this trying occasion." The next day a cabinet meeting was held at which the physicians were interviewed separately.

During the night of the 15th George III slept for only two hours. Edema of the legs had developed and they had to be scarified. This symptom suggests that the heart muscle had been overtaxed by ceaseless physical activity. The King appeared very ill and for a time it was



thought that he had had a stroke of paralysis. He had to be kept in a strait-waistcoat most of the day to give his exhausted body some rest from its violence. And again the cry was raised that the King was near death.

There was a sharp change for the better on February 17. The bulletin stated that "the King had several hours sleep in the night and appeared much refreshed today." Doctor Simmons' prognosis was for a short illness, to be followed by complete recovery. He declared that recurrent attacks in patients suffering from this malady were common but that each illness was shorter than the preceding one—an inaccurate, but very encouraging, generalization.

On February 19, for the first time in a week, the King appeared quite normal for several hours, and engaged in a quiet conversation with Compton, one of his favorite pages. He happened to ask Compton if he had any children, to which his faithful servant answered, half apologetically, that he had only daughters. For a moment the King's face beamed. Then he scowled and struck the table angrily. "Never have any sons!" he sputtered. "If you have, there must be an eldest; and he will publish your letters!" Those fateful letters were still in the King's mind. And the fact that he spoke of them at this moment gives added weight to the theory that the publication of his correspondence by the Prince of Wales was partially responsible for bringing on the 1804 attack.

The average amount of sleep in twenty-four hours soon increased from two to six hours. The physicians appeared regularly before the Cabinet for interrogation. They testified on February 22 and 27 that George III was competent to perform his royal duties. At the latter examination Doctor Simmons said, "I think his Majesty is perfectly competent; but if the point led to a long argument or fatiguing discussion, I think the experiment would be imprudent." When asked whether they considered the King "capable of any deliberative act" the physicians declined to give a definite opinion. On February 27 Sir Robert Lawley moved the adjournment of Parliament upon the ground of the King's personal incapacity. When Addington replied that his Majesty was competent to carry on his royal functions, Parliament remained in session.

On March 4 the physicians were again examined by the Cabinet. Doctor Reynolds stated that during his four-hour shift of duty the King was still excessively loquacious; and that while he was able to play backgammon he was not yet able to concentrate on matters of state.

Like the rest of the physicians, Reynolds was certain of the patient's ultimate recovery but said that it would be sooner were he "a private gentleman."

On March 5 a bill given royal assent\* by commission was sent to Parliament. On the 9th the same procedure was carried out but this time Lord Fitzwilliam, one of the Opposition leaders, challenged the propriety of the government's action. How could the King be consulted on matters of state, asked Fitzwilliam, when the physicians' reports held out no hope of a speedy recovery? The Chancellor, Lord Eldon, answered for the government, insisting that they had proceeded with great caution. "I would sooner suffer my right hand to be severed from my body," he said fervently, "than act in such an instance upon light or superficial grounds."

To still the voice of the Opposition on the subject of the sovereign's health, George III was driven out with the Queen and the Princesses through the principal streets of London and Westminster on March 9. The last official bulletin of the 1804 illness appeared on March 22. "His Majesty is much better," it stated, "and in our opinion a short time will perfect his recovery."

This sounded a gloriously overoptimistic note. On the following day the King was permitted to ride in the Queen's riding house. He galloped so long and so furiously that he nearly killed his favorite horse. It was later learned that the horse's exhausted state was not merely from racing about the riding ring, but from a mad dash to see the Princess of Wales at Blackheath. According to Glenbervie, ". . . he rode out of it without giving any notice to any of his attendants, rode through the Park, to the astonishment of the beholders, under the windows of the several public offices which look that way, out at Story's Gate and over Westminster Bridge, followed or rather pursued by equerries, grooms, and lifeguardsmen, whom he left at a great distance and totally ignorant of where he was going. His appearance, on his arrival, terrified the Princess and still more poor Lady Sheffield, who was in waiting. His discourse and actions, her Royal Highness told me, could not be repeated. He insisted on seeing her alone and ordered the Duke of Cumberland, who had overtaken him, to remain in another room."†

\*This procedure implies that the sovereign approves of the bill but needs not give it his written assent.

†It is of interest to recall that the patient made a similar mad excursion in May, 1801, when he was convalescing from his previous attack of mental disorder.

Meanwhile the Addington government continued its shaky course, despite ominous rumblings from the Opposition. Charles Abbot, the Speaker of the House of Commons, noted in his diary on March 29: "Saw Mr. Addington. The King dreads a defeat of his Ministry in Parliament as the forerunner of a Regency. To keep his health safe is the cause of the country." Undoubtedly, the strongest factor in preserving the ebbing life of the Addington government was the King's illness. Both Fox and Grenville were chafing at the delay in overthrowing Addington, but Pitt refused to precipitate matters. He told Lord Malmesbury that "... after the most diligent thought and reflection" he had decided that delay was the only course "... which he could consider as calculated for the public good; and by the public good he meant a continuation of security, quiet and prosperity of the country and every individual in it."

Certainly the one "individual" about whom Pitt was most concerned was his Majesty, George III. Pitt had suffered acutely from his role as precipitator of the 1801 attack. He knew that the projected change in ministry had helped to bring on the present attack. And he wanted no part in the responsibility for prolonging the King's illness. It was his plan to remain in discreet obscurity until the King was so far recovered that a relapse would be unlikely.

Many people thought they detected a certain duplicity in Pitt's behavior. Pitt wanted Addington's Ministry destroyed—by any one but himself—so that when the King should call on him to build anew on the ruins, his hands would be clean. For his inaction Fox branded Pitt as a "... mean, low-minded dog." On April 9, Fox wrote to Lord Lauderdale, "You think that the Court cannot now be forced. Remember, all I have said is that there is a chance that it may. Pitt's utter incapacity to act like a man renders that chance much less than it would otherwise be."

Malmesbury states that when he again discussed the political situation with Pitt on April 12, "... which was prior to any of the strong divisions in the House of Commons, he repeated to me the same sentiments he had expressed on the 19th of February; and declared his decided intention of making a communication to the King previous to his taking any conclusive step. I applauded extremely this, and repeated what I had so often said, that too much care and attention could not be paid to the King's ease and comfort, not only because it was what the whole of his reign and conduct called for, but because the very existence

of the country hung, perhaps on his life. To all this, Pitt over and over agreed."

By the middle of April the accounts of the King's condition became so favorable that Pitt decided that he could at last openly join with the Opposition, without the likelihood of retarding recovery or causing a relapse. On April 21 Pitt composed a long letter to his sovereign outlining his political opinions and attitudes, which he sent to the Chancellor, Lord Eldon, requesting him to deliver it into the King's hands. "Its object," said Pitt, "is to convey to his Majesty, as a mark of respect, a previous intimation of the sentiments which I may find it necessary to avow in Parliament." Despite the importance of the letter, Pitt's first consideration was for the King's well-being. He wanted it delivered, if possible, before the debate on Fox's motion, ". . . to Inquire into the State of the Nation," which was scheduled for the 23rd. However, if the Chancellor felt the interval prior to the debate unpropitious, he was to give it to the King later. The fact that Eldon waited six days to deliver Pitt's letter suggests that the psychiatric condition of the royal patient was not entirely satisfactory in the interval, even though he was able to preside on the 23rd at the Privy Council Meeting.

Pitt's letter outlined to the King how he had tried to support the present Ministry and how it had become progressively difficult for him to do so conscientiously, until it had finally become an utter impossibility. It closed with a promise that he would do nothing which would upset the King: "I trust your Majesty will pardon me if I venture to add the assurance that whatever may be the course of public affairs, and whatever may be my own personal opinion respecting the system of government which would be most advisable in the present state of the country and of political parties; it will be my determination to avoid committing myself to any engagement the effects of which would be likely to occasion, in any contingency, a sentiment of dissatisfaction or uneasiness in your Majesty's mind." Two days after he had declared himself to the King, Pitt began his bombardment of the ministers in power, unequivocally declaring that the country's salvation lay in their prompt removal.

On April 26 Addington personally notified the King that he could no longer carry on the public business. He told his friends that the King showed great concern and indignation, even suggesting an immediate dissolution of Parliament in the hope that the newly elected rep-

representatives would better support his Ministry. The Chancellor's account of the King's reaction was somewhat different. It shows the heroic efforts which the poor monarch was making to rule competently. After his first reaction of excitement at Addington's decision to resign ". . . George III recollected himself and used nearly these words: 'After the severe affliction with which I have been visited, and from which it has pleased Providence to relieve me, it would ill become me to give way to any unseemly hastiness or impatience, still less could I be justified at a moment like this to add to the difficulties of the day by listening to any private feelings or personal prejudices. It is my duty to prevent confusion in my Kingdom, and that duty will I perform.'"

The contemplated union of Fox with Pitt was considered a more shocking misalliance than Fox's union with North two decades before. Fox and Pitt had been on the opposite sides of nearly every political question. Their differences, which were deep-rooted manifestations of their dissimilar personalities, had been exaggerated by the French Revolution and the issues growing out of it. Throughout this period, when the plans for the new government were being discussed, every step that the wary Pitt took was made with one eye firmly fixed on the King's mental health. "From various considerations and still more from this last illness," Pitt wrote Melville, "I feel that a proposal to take into a share in his councils persons against whom he has long entertained such strong and natural objections, ought never to be made to him, but in such a manner as to leave him a free option." Pitt had also made it perfectly clear to Fox that, although they were engaged in a joint crusade, it was quite possible that Fox might not be allowed to enter the holy land. He refused to issue an ultimatum to George III stating that he would not serve in the Cabinet without Fox. Three years before, he had had a very disturbing experience when he had presented George III with an ultimatum.\*

On May 2 Pitt sent, again through Lord Eldon, a long letter to the King outlining his general views on the make-up of the new Cabinet. He emphasized the necessity of establishing the administration on a

\*Macaulay severely criticizes Pitt for his weak stand on this occasion. "That he was perfectly sincere there can be no doubt," he says, "but it was not enough to be sincere; he should have been resolute. Had he declared himself determined not to take office without Fox, the Royal obstinacy would have given way." But Macaulay's indictment fails to consider Pitt's main concern—namely, not to upset the King's mental balance.

broad foundation and asked that he be permitted to confer with Mr. Fox and Lord Grenville in regard to their co-operation and participation. He repeated his assurance that he would never again agitate the royal mind by reviving the question of Catholic Toleration. Judging by the character of the King's reply on May 5, he was quite upset. Surely the letter revealed a greater degree of agitation and irritability toward Pitt than would have been shown had George III been in good mental health. "It cannot but be lamented," he wrote, "that Mr. Pitt should have taken so rooted a dislike to a gentleman [Addington] who has the greatest claim to approbation from his King and country for his most diligent and able discharge of the duties of Speaker of the House of Commons for twelve years; and of his still more handsomely coming forward (when Mr. Pitt and some of his colleagues resigned their employments) to support his King and country when the most ill digested and dangerous proposition was brought forward by the enemies of the established Church. His Majesty has too good an opinion of Mr. Pitt to think he would have given his countenance to such a measure, had he weighed its tendency with that attention which a man of his judgment should call forth when the subject under consideration is of so serious a nature. . . . The King can never forget the wound that was intended at the Palladium of our Church Establishment, the Test Act, and the indelicacy, not to call it worse, of wanting his Majesty to forego his solemn Coronation Oath. . . ." The King went on to deliver himself of his hatred and distrust of Fox. "The whole tenor of Mr. Fox's conduct," he wrote, "rendered his expulsion from the Privy Council indispensable, and obliges the King to express his astonishment that Mr. Pitt should for one moment harbour the thought of bringing such a man before his royal notice. To prevent the repetition of it, the King declares that if Mr. Pitt persists in such an idea, or in proposing to consult Lord Grenville, His Majesty will have to deplore that he cannot avail himself of the ability of Mr. Pitt with necessary restrictions. These points being understood His Majesty does not object to Mr. Pitt's forming such a plan for conducting the public business as may under all circumstances appear to be eligible; but should Mr. Pitt, unfortunately, find himself unable to undertake what is here proposed, the King will in that case call for the assistance of such men as are truly attached to our happy Constitution, and not seekers of improvements which to all dispassionate men must appear to tend to the destruction of that noble fabric which is the pride of all thinking minds, and the envy of all foreign nations."

The letter took no heed of Pitt's request for an interview. That it was not merely an expression of momentary irritability is borne out by the King's communication to Eldon, written later on the same day, in which he said, "The King is much pleased with his excellent Chancellor's note: he doubts much whether Mr. Pitt will, after weighing the contents of the paper delivered this day to him by Lord Eldon, choose to have a personal interview with His Majesty; but whether he will not rather prepare another essay, containing as many empty words and little information, as the one he had before transmitted."

Even so loyal a subject as Pitt must have cursed under his breath when he read the King's letter. But he had a sympathetic understanding of his sovereign's condition, and he was above all things resolved to upset him no further. He went manfully to work to form a government along the lines prescribed by George III.\* But he did not cringe in his answer to the King's truculent communication of May 5. ". . . I cannot refrain from expressing the deep concern," he said, "with which I observe the manner in which my sentiments appear in some respects to have been misunderstood. . . . The opinions I have expressed respecting the person now holding the chief place in your Majesty's Government have not arisen from any sentiments of personal dislike to that gentleman; they have been formed wholly on the view of his public conduct.

"On the subject of the proposal made in 1801 respecting the Catholics . . . I must beg leave to declare that my opinion on that subject was formed on the fullest deliberation . . . my opinion of the propriety and rectitude of the measure at the time it was proposed remains unaltered; but other considerations, and sentiments of deference to your Majesty, have led me since to feel it both a personal and public duty to abstain from again pressing that Measure on your Majesty's consideration. . . .

"It now remains for me to express the extreme regret with which I learn your Majesty's strong disapprobation of the proposal . . . for forming at the present difficult crisis a strong and comprehensive Government, uniting the principal weight and talents of public men of all descriptions." The letter concluded with another plea for a personal audience, in which Pitt said he hoped to convince the King of the desirability of a coalition government.

\*In reply to a letter from George Rose affirming that no Ministry could last without the inclusion of Fox, the Lord Chancellor wrote: "I see no medium between Mr. Pitt's trying what you think not lasting, and the King's being destroyed. God forgive all those who have brought either of them in this situation."

On May 7, at his sovereign's request, Chancellor Eldon called on Pitt while he was at breakfast, and they proceeded together to the Queen's House. Pitt refused to have his audience before he personally interviewed the physicians and received from them a signed opinion that the sight of an old servant, from whom the King had been estranged for three years, would not too greatly upset him and that the discussion of important political affairs would not be injurious. Pitt seems to have feared the meeting greatly and tried to get the Chancellor to participate in it, but Eldon demurred. The interview went off far better than Pitt expected. On entering the room he congratulated the King on how much better he looked than upon his recovery in 1801. "It is not to be wondered at," George answered. "I was then on the point of parting with an old friend, and I am now about to regain one."

The King's gracious reply was in striking contrast to the letter that he had written two days before. The two can be reconciled only as evidence of his marked instability. His whole attitude was inconsistent with the tone of the letter. He was easily persuaded to Lord Grenville's joining the government and was entirely willing to sanction Fox's appointment as a foreign ambassador, or to any post which did not require personal contact between Fox and himself. The *London Times* of May 8 contained a paragraph reporting the audience. "Mr. Pitt," it stated, "was yesterday admitted to the honour of a conference with the King which lasted three hours. He was, we understand, not a little surprised to find his Majesty so perfectly competent to attend to any public business." This report greatly upset George III because, by implication, it questioned his competence. In his correspondence with the Duke of Portland he branded the notice as "slandrous and licentious."

Pitt's constant concern about the effect that his actions might have upon the King's health is shown by his letter to the Chancellor the day after the royal audience. "I shall be much obliged to you," he wrote, "if you can send me a single line to let me know what accounts you have from the Queen's House this morning." On May 9 Pitt had a second audience. To Eldon he reported that night, "I have had another interview today, not quite, I am sorry to say, so satisfactory as that of Monday. I do not think there was anything positively wrong but there was a hurry of spirits, an excessive love of talking, which showed that either the airing of this morning, or the seeing of so many persons, and conversing so much during these three days, has rather



tended to disturb. The only inference I draw from this observation is, that too much caution cannot be used in still keeping exertion of all sorts, and particularly conversation, within reasonable limits."

Charles Fox displayed his usual magnanimity when he learned that he had been proscribed by the King. He urged Lord Grenville and his other friends to join with Pitt, but they refused. Lord Grenville felt that the King's condition was such that his reign could not last much longer and he did not feel it worth his while to remain under the subjugation of his cousin, William Pitt, for this short period. The Opposition was summoned to unite. The King wrote to Pitt on May 9, "It is not without *astonishment* he sees by the *Times* that the Opposition Meeting was held at Carlton House." The Prince of Wales' willingness to make an open display of his intense antagonism to Pitt, immediately on his resumption of office, was a source of added worry to his father.

On May 9, at "M/48 pt 6 P.M.," the King wrote to Addington instructing him to attend the following morning at ten with the Seals of Exchequer. He showed great concern for Addington on his dismissal. "The King's friendship for Mr. Addington," he wrote, "is too deeply grown on his heart to be in the least diminished by any change of situation. His Majesty will order the Warrant to be prepared for creating Mr. Addington, Earl of Banbury, Viscount Wallingford, and Baron Reading. . . . The King will settle such a pension on Mrs. Addington, whose virtue and modesty he admires, as Mr. Addington may choose to propose." Addington refused these honors. When the King found him adamant he said, "You are a proud man, Mr. Addington, but I am a proud man too; and why should I sleep uneasy on my pillow because you will not comply with my request?"

He continued to worry about Addington. On May 18 he wrote Lord Eldon that Addington ". . . seems to require quiet, as his mind is perplexed between returning affection for Mr. Pitt, and great soreness at the contemptuous treatment he met with at the end of the last session from whom he had ever looked upon as his private friend. This makes the King resolve to keep them for some time asunder." In his efforts to console Addington on his dismissal, George III went the length of taking the Queen and the Princesses to visit him at the White Lodge and later presented him with a portrait of the Queen and two of himself. One of these was a copy of Beechey's portrait of him, together with the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York, reviewing the

troops. Significantly enough, he had the figure of the Prince painted out of the copy before he presented it.

The excitement attendant upon the change of ministry affected the King markedly. The Opposition become vocal and aggressive and circulated false rumors that exaggerated his condition. Charles Grey recounted to his wife the gossip then going on in London: "One story is that, upon being stopped by some embarrass in Bond Street, the King put his head out of the chaise window, and cried, 'Hot Buns!' I don't know how Pitt feels, but I should be miserable in his place. The uncertainty of the King's remaining even as he is, and the embarrassment to which Pitt must be daily exposed by his extravagance, must make the task of government a dreadful one. He looks pale and ill."

It is evident from a letter addressed to the King on May 18, which was signed jointly by Pitt and the Lord Chancellor, that things were not going well with the patient. It included a communication from the physicians stating that the King would have to curb his activities if he wanted to re-establish and preserve his health, ". . . and with it everything that is most important to your Majesty's Personal Comfort and to the Continuance of the full and beneficial Exercise of Your Majesty's Royal Authority for the happiness of Your Subjects." The ministers cautioned him to avoid ". . . too frequent or protracted Audiences and Conversations," if he would prevent a serious relapse.

On May 19 the Marquis of Buckingham wrote to Lord Grenville, "Much was built on the hopes of being able to move him today to Windsor, but Doctor Symonds has stated the decided impossibility of such a journey in the present state of irritation. The Duke of Cambridge accompanies him in his daily airings, the Queen and Princesses following in another carriage, having found it impossible to control the King to any propriety of conduct in their coach . . . you will not wonder that our new ministers look very blank and that they have found great difficulties in filling their vacancies." According to the observations of an intimate of the household, "He was apparently quite himself when talking on business, and to his Ministers. He then collected and re-collected himself; but, in his family and usual society, his manners and conversation were far from steady—fanciful, suspicious, etc."

The royal patient was at this time very difficult to manage. Pitt, in great alarm, reported to Eldon a conversation with the monarch on the

24th: "The topics treated of were such, as did not at all arise out of any view (right or wrong) of the *actual state* of things, but referred to plans of foreign politics, that could only be creatures of an imagination heated and disordered." The Duke of York on the same day wrote to the Lord Chancellor, who was believed to have more influence over the King than any one else, "I am afraid, from what I have heard, that things were not comfortable at the Queen's house this morning, and wish you would inquire of Sir Francis Millman and Doctor Simmonds before you go in to the King, as he seems to dwell much upon the illegality of his confinement, and is not aware of the dreadful consequences which may attend him if any unfortunate circumstances can be brought forward in Parliament."

General Harcourt's wife reported ". . . that Pitt judged ill in leaving the sole disposal of the Household to the King—that this sort of power in his present, weak, and, of course, suspicious state of mind had been exercised by him most improperly; he had dismissed and turned away, and made capricious changes everywhere, from the Lord Chamberlain to the grooms and footmen; he had turned away the Queen's favourite coachman, made footmen grooms, and vice versa; and what were still worse, because more notorious, had removed Lords of the Bedchamber without a shadow of reason; that all this afflicted the Royal Family beyond measure; the Queen was ill and *cross*, the Princesses low, depressed, and quite sinking under it; and that unless means could be found to place some very strong-minded and temperate person about the King, he would either commit some extravagance, or he would by violent exercise and carelessness, injure his health and bring on a deadly illness." Braun, who had been, until a few moments before his dismissal, his favorite and most faithful page, was impetuously discharged by George III on May 19.

Lord Auckland, who had been in official service for thirty-two years, and Lord Salisbury, who had held office for twenty years, were summarily dismissed by the unstable King. Lord Salisbury wrote to the King to protest his having been displaced suddenly as Chamberlain by Lord Dartmouth. He resented the reason which the King gave him for his dismissal—his high esteem for the newly appointed incumbent. He further resented the suddenness of the royal action. In regard to this he expressed particular bewilderment, because of what had occurred, "when I had the honour to see your Majesty last alone, upon which Occasion Your Majesty graciously deigned to assure me

with particular expressions of esteem and favour that you did not wish to take my Staff from me." The calligraphy in the King's drafts of the letters which he wrote at this time is interesting. There is marked evidence of hurry and instability. Words are cramped and run together, phrases are partially scratched out—the whole presenting a picture of confusion. Later in the summer the King boasted that he had rid himself of Lord Salisbury as a stratagem of economy. He realized that new furniture was needed in the royal residence, Buckingham House, and it had long been a custom that the old furniture should be taken by the Lord Chamberlain—therefore he precipitated Lord Salisbury's dismissal and postponed making the new appointment official so that the furniture in the interval could be removed to Kew and Hampton Court.

Most of the intimate court group felt that Doctor Simmons, the psychiatrist who was directing the treatment and management during the 1804 attack, did not have satisfactory control over the patient. He was generally considered inferior to the Willises. It was conceded, however, that Pitt was now impotent to call on the Willises, since Addington had not earlier insisted upon their attendance. On May 26 the King was persuaded to go to Windsor for a few days, in hope that his separation from the men actively engaged in politics would have a quieting influence. But he could be prevailed upon to remain away only until the 29th. According to Rose's diary, his behavior during the short absence from London was quite abnormal. And on his return he was low-spirited and cried readily.

Events were moving toward a political crisis. Few felt that Pitt could continue to carry on the government with so reckless and obviously sick a ruler. The Opposition was again beginning to plan for a Regency. The Marquis of Buckingham wrote to Lord Grenville on May 30, "The Prince before dinner took Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Carlisle and me (for Fox was at the House of Commons) aside and told us that the King's situation was desperate." He told them that he believed his father's sanity "irrecoverably gone," and that he would accept the Regency under the same restrictions that were laid down in 1788, even naming his advisers. On June 19 Lord Grenville drafted a communication for the Prince to the Lord Chancellor. It began with a statement that the King had been ill for five months and still required "the guidance and control not only of his physicians; but also of their inferior attendants. Of these distressing circumstances no communica-

tion has ever been made, either to His Majesty's Privy Council, or to his Parliament. . . . Without any communication with the Prince, His Majesty's medical treatment has been regulated under their [ministers'] orders alone, even when it became necessary to exclude from His Majesty the whole of his own family. . . . He [the Prince] cannot acknowledge in the King's ministers an authority which they have assumed, as he believes, without warrant, and which is manifestly capable of the worst abuse."

Even George Rose, who was devoted to the King, noted in his diary at this time that there was "a serious apprehension that his Majesty's recovery is not entirely complete. The reflections on which cannot but be painful in an extreme degree, as the embarrassments arising therefrom are likely to be of the most serious nature. If his Majesty shall be subject to returns such as are just alluded to, it can hardly be creditable or proper for Mr. Pitt to carry on the government. On the other hand, if the King shall be as well as he ordinarily has been lately, and as fit to do business as he has been found to be, it will be a strong measure to have a regency; for he is certainly not ill enough to be confined. It would be a quite new occurrence to have the government taken from a Prince on the throne, without the desire proceeding from him, while he is well enough to go about everywhere, and talk on grave subjects perfectly rationally."

This is a clear portrayal of the difficulties which so often exist in the proper handling of a patient suffering from a definite but mild manic psychosis. Much of the time his behavior is normal, but then suddenly judgment clouds and self-restraint diminishes. While he is in this condition restrictions and control of any kind irk the patient tremendously. The deviations from the normal are fundamentally quantitative rather than qualitative and they are sometimes so subtle that the patient and even many of his associates are not aware of them. Neither the patient nor, in many cases, members of his family realize the many potentialities for mischief which then exist. No attention is paid to the words of obviously insane men. On the other hand, hypomanic individuals often seem to be astute and exceedingly plausible. Any signs of disorder that are present are cleverly minimized through rationalization. There are certain to be well-wishing friends assuring the patient of his normality. And a king, surrounded as he is by sycophants, is sure to receive more than his share of encouragement. Pitt and Eldon found themselves in a dilemma. To the King they had to stress the symptoms of his persist-

ing morbidity. But to the public, they were forced to emphasize the evidences of his normality in an effort to thwart the demands of the Opposition for a Regency.

On May 25 prayers of thanksgiving were read for the royal recovery. On June 1, a fortnight after their first joint communication, Pitt and Eldon sent a second letter to the King referring to his unwillingness to submit himself to the control of the physicians. "It becomes an indispensable Duty," they wrote, "distinctly to represent to Your Majesty that the conduct on the Part of Doctor Simmons at which your Majesty has been offended, appears to be only an Instance of that Care and Precaution to which Your Majesty owes the Progress happily made in your Recovery, and the Continuance of which is absolutely necessary to compleat it." In the same letter they opposed countermanding the Drawing Room on June 4 in celebration of his sixty-sixth birthday. They closed with an earnest exhortation: "We feel that we should sacrifice our first Duty to Your Majesty if we did not press on Your Majesty's Serious Attention, our most decided conviction that no Prospect remains of Perfecting Your Recovery and guarding against the Danger of a Relapse unless Your Majesty shall strictly and uniformly conform in all Points to every Rule laid down by Your Majesty's medical guidance, until they are able to pronounce that every Symptom and Remnant of Complaint are removed."

The birthday was celebrated with a great crowd present; but the King was not well enough to attend. The Prince of Wales drove nonchalantly through the London streets on the coach-box of his barouche during the celebration, to show the world his indifference to the whole affair. There seemed to be a slight improvement in George III's condition during the next few weeks, though he continued to resent guidance and control. He appointed officers of his household not only without seeking Pitt's advice but even without informing him of his appointments. This would normally have been treated as an insult, but under the prevailing conditions it was passed over as a vagary of conduct.

During June the problem of the King's going to Weymouth for the summer came up again, just as it had three years before, during the 1801 illness. It was felt that he was not yet ready for the increased social activity, the long horseback rides, the frequent attendance at the theatre, the bathing, and the excited interest in the fleet, which would occur there. George Villiers sent Pitt a letter on June 21 advising him

to treat the matter much as Lord Eldon had done during the earlier illness—to inform the King that since the physicians did not feel that his immediate departure from London was vital to his health, it was desirable that he remain in London to look after the public business. “This will please him in two respects,” wrote Villiers, “first that you do not propose this alteration in his plans without due consideration to his health and secondly, that you think him essential to public business, a point on which his Majesty is particularly jealous. It is very material that the Weymouth plans should be stopt as many of the orders he daily gives are extravagant and inconvenient to a great degree.”

## CHAPTER XXIV



*"There is a pleasure, sure,  
In being mad, which none but mad men know."*

DRYDEN—*Spanish Friar*

DURING THE SUMMER the Prince of Wales began making overtures of reconciliation to his father. There had been no intercourse between them since their bitter discord, more than six months before, over the publication by the Prince of their private correspondence. Apparently, by the first part of July, the Prince recognized that there was to be no Regency in the immediate future. In consequence, he wrote his mother, or had written for him, one of his characteristic hollow, sentimental letters, reeking with filial piety, in which he proclaimed, "Independent of what I suffer from such a cruel privation, as the being separated from you and my sisters, I lament heavily the not paying my duty to the King. Were this allowed me, I should throw myself at the King's feet, and offer to him the testimony of my ever-unvarying attachment." Queen Charlotte immediately responded with a tender letter promising to inform the King at once of the Prince's welcome change of heart. But George III was not so easily softened. He had been thoroughly disillusioned by previous protestations of filial affection.

Negotiations between the Prince and the Chancellor in regard to the residence and education of Princess Charlotte, the attractive little eight-year-old daughter of the Prince, had been in progress for some time. She was the King's only grandchild and he was tremendously devoted to her. He never seemed so happy as when she was sitting on his knee singing "Hearts of Oak" for him. He felt that her education, as heir apparent to the throne, was of great concern to the nation, and he believed that his son, who was spending most of his time carousing at Brighthelmstone, was neglecting her. He considered, perhaps with some justification, that his first-born's influence on any female would be



destructive, even if she were only eight; consequently he wanted her to live with him at Windsor. According to Lord Malmesbury, the Prince could not determine what stand he should take in regard to his child's residence and guidance: "Ladies Moira, Hutchinson and Mrs. Fitzherbert, were for his ceding the child to the King; the Duke of Clarence and Devonshire House most violently against it; and the Prince was inclined to the faction he saw last. In the Devonshire House cabal, Lady Melbourne and Mrs. Fox act conspicuous parts, so that the alternative for our future Queen seems to be, whether Mrs. Fox or Mrs. Fitzherbert will have the ascendancy."

The Prince finally concluded that by yielding to his father's wishes in regard to the child he would promptly gain his favor. He therefore instructed Lord Moira to inform the Chancellor that the King could have the care of the little Princess. But he was mistaken in his supposition; his stubborn father was still unwilling to bend. In his letter of July 18 to Lord Eldon, George III wrote, "Undoubtedly the Prince of Wales in making the offer of having dear little Charlotte's education and principles attended to, is the best earnest he can give to returning to a sense of what he owes to his father, and indeed to his country, and may to a degree mollify the feelings of an injured father; but it will require some reflection before the King can answer how soon he can bring himself to receive the publisher of his letters."

When the Prince saw that this plan would not immediately change the attitude of the King toward him, he began to shift his position, claiming that he had not definitely instructed Lord Moira to give the care and education of his daughter over to his father. A compromise was finally reached, with the Princess spending nearly half the year with her father and the rest of the time with her grandparents. In August, the King wrote Lord Chancellor Eldon, ". . . his Majesty is willing to receive the Prince of Wales on Wednesday at Kew, provided no explanation or excuses are attempted to be made by the Prince of Wales, but that it is merely to be a visit of civility; as any retrospect could but oblige the King to utter truths which, instead of healing, must widen the present breach. His Majesty will have the Queen, the Princesses, and at least one of his sons, the Duke of Cambridge, present on the occasion." After the engagement was made the Prince decided it was not to his liking, but the Chancellor refused to cancel it for him. At the last moment the Prince pleaded ill health and the reunion was postponed.

George III was fit enough to appear in person to prorogue Parliament on July 31, 1804. According to the Speaker of the House, "He looked extremely well, and read the Speech well with great animation but accidentally turned over two leaves together and so omitted about one-fourth of his intended Speech. It happened, however, that the transition was not incoherent, and it escaped some of the Cabinet who heard it before the King delivered it." Whether the error was primarily the result of the hurried state of mind which he frequently manifested during his lingering illness, or, as he himself interpreted it, an evidence of his failing vision,\* it is difficult to say. The letter which he sent Pitt a few days later strongly bespeaks a somewhat abnormally exhilarated state. "The King felt no fatigue from the ceremony of Tuesday," he wrote, "as he was conscious he was acting as he ought; and the sentiments of the Speech were so thoroughly his own that they could not but invigorate him."

The King's overactive, or hypomanic, condition became static during the later summer months. Lord Auckland wrote during the middle of August, ". . . sometimes there is a return of the hurried manner which gives alarm and uneasiness, but it is only in family scenes." Other reports from Windsor indicated that much of the time ". . . the King's spirits were much too good." Lord and Lady Glenbervie visited the King and Queen on the terrace at Windsor during the promenade hour on the evening of August 15. "The King appeared to me thinner," Glenbervie reported, "paler and with a more shrivelled countenance than when I saw him at the Council which was held at Cuffnells after his recovery in 1801; his clothes hung loose upon him as on that occasion, and I thought his eyes looked open quite round with a glare that one could not look at without uneasiness. . . . The King, very soon after we came on the Terrace, having first said a few words to Lady Glenbervie and Fred, who was with us, came up to General Harcourt and me where we happened to be standing at some little distance from the rest of the group, and entered upon a conversation, or rather a discourse (for we scarcely said anything), which certainly lasted above an hour and without any pause and related to a variety of

\*In support of the view that the omission was the result of failing vision is the fact that when the Arthur Stanhopes visited the King and Queen just prior to the opening of the next session of Parliament, in January, 1805, he complained that he was unable to see the playing cards and dreaded having to read his speech. At Mrs. Stanhope's suggestion, the speech was printed in very large letters and the reading was flawless. That was the last time that he was able to open Parliament in person.

subjects and persons. . . . There was nothing in what the King said of men or things which did not appear to me sensible or rational and indeed arising from the reflections of an able man, but they were matters in which it was impolitic to suppose he would have opened himself so freely and so copiously either to General Harcourt or me, much less to both together; if he had been in perfect possession of himself. It was exactly the case of *dicenda tacenda locutus*."

Soon after this interview took place the King and his entourage moved from Windsor to their summer quarters at Weymouth. In preparation for the change the physicians made an official representation to their royal patient on July 7. "We consider the same degree of attendance upon His Majesty, which has hitherto been continued, to be no longer necessary," they stated, "but propose that from this time it should be gradually withdrawn . . . we feel it our duty humbly, but earnestly, to recommend to His Majesty a strict attention to avoid as much as possible any hurry, or excess of Fatigue especially during the heat which may be expected for some weeks to come, and we have further to suggest to His Majesty the propriety of removing to the Sea Side after the heat of the summer is past as a measure likely to confirm the re-establishment of His Health." The medical staff believed that a more complete separation from the minutiae of government had now become necessary. The members of the Cabinet felt too, that they could relax more easily if the King were vacationing far away from the officialdom of London. As Lord Grenville put it, "Mr. Pitt was glad to lend himself to the Weymouth journey to remove the King from *his* presence and councils." The Army leaders were not very enthusiastic about the King's summer plans. They found, because of the bugaboo of the French invasion, that they could not spare enough regiments to satisfy George III's excessive demands for soldiers to review. The extravagance of manic patients is not confined to expenditures of money, but involves the entire concept of quantity.

On August 3, Pitt received an important anonymous communication making recommendations about the King's medical care. It was obviously the work of some member of the inner circle, and there is reason to believe that it was written by the King's seventh son, Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge. "The irritable state of the King's mind," it read, "is connected with some unfortunate circumstances which are well known to you; but I am persuaded it is increased to the extent we see it chiefly by his extreme dislike to Doctor Symons. It is natural

enough for the King to dislike a person who stands in such a relation to him, but how much must this dislike be increased when he experiences so little of that address and management to which he knows himself entitled!

"On Tuesday evening the King returned from Parliament with great satisfaction that he had passed well thro' the duties of the day and with much good humor told his family that he felt he should sleep well that night. Soon after the King retired to his room Doctor Symons came and after asking him when he went to Weymouth, abruptly said he should attend his Majesty. This incensed the King and after a violent altercation he passed as might be expected a restless night. His own account to his family was that after some hours vehement struggle with himself, he became more composed—that a little sleep was ended at an early hour—but as he had promised at Mrs. Stanhope's earnest entreaty not to rise before six that morning he continued in his bed. He ended his discourse with indignant reflections on the treatment he experienced. . . . It may seem harsh to doubt a sincere wish on that Doctor's part for the King's speedy recovery, but if the means used by Willis were right to allay the irritation subsequent to these attacks, the means used by Symons are wrong. The Willises after the former attacks gave the King wine bark and nourishment. He has not been treated thus by Symons. The King believes the Truth of His Religion and his mind has at all times been sustained by a strong sense of Divine Providence. Had he been an enthusiast there might be some solution of Symons endeavouring to lock up his Bible and to keep him from such conversation with his friends as would now comfort and compose him.

"The King in his present convalescent state can be ruled only by persuasion. The King is a man of his word, and could not a compromise be made under his solemn promise of obedience, in permitting Heberden or any Physician agreeable to His Majesty and you, to attend him to Weymouth? This physician might correspond with Willis. . . . There is one thing to which I would particularly call notice. Such is the King's impatience of Symons that he has turned in his mind whatever may tend to dismiss him and one day lately as the result of such thoughts he told his family explicitly that he would recur to the Prince of Wales to rid him of this torment.

"Whatever should be the compromise with the Prince in this head it probably would not please those who wish well to you and your friends.

"I have the honour to be Sir with the highest respect your constant friend."

This convincing letter produced prompt action. On August 9 the King's medical staff drew up a report for Pitt.

We are of the opinion [it stated] that from what has been represented to us (and from these representations only we can judge, as we have not had the honour of seeing His Majesty for these last five weeks) that the attendance of Doctor Simmons may for the present be withdrawn, and the care of His Majesty intrusted, for a time at least to one of these physicians who has been lately in attendance. This Physician must likewise attend His Majesty to Weymouth, and be ready if occasion should arise, to apply to Doctor Simmons, whose assistance should immediately be called for if circumstances require.

L. Pepys

L. R. Reynolds

Fr. Milman

W. Heberden

The King went to Weymouth late in August. His abnormally accelerated tempo and his impatience with all efforts to control him are well described in a letter written by Lady Harriet Hesketh from Weymouth on August 26. ". . . You will feel a very mix'd sensation," wrote Lady Hesketh to her friend, "when I tell you their Majesties travell'd all night after travelling all day; and arrived here some after 6 in the morning! to me and perhaps to you this sort of Evolution, may appear to have required Rest and repose but our gracious sovereign thought very differently, for at 7 and 8 he was walking about the town! at 10 he got on horseback and rode two hours after which he and the Queen walk'd on the Esplanade! after which he went out of Town and employ'd himself in marking out the Camp, and giving the proper directions—after dinner 'till quite dark, he saw all the troops pass before him; and in particular the Hanoverian Horse—very fine troops indeed, as I am told, for I did not see them; in honor of them, He mounted a very spirited Hanoverian Charger which he rode and exercised as if he had been a man of thirty and certainly gallop'd as hard! what he did afterward I know not, but had a card party I conclude, and talk'd to all the world; this morning I saw him walking before breakfast, and the moment Church was over the Royal family embarked at the pierhead, and went on board the new Yacht the *Royal Sovereign*."

News of such activity reached his physicians and evoked from them

an admonitory letter which they all five signed. "If his Majesty will command himself so to adopt no Plan which may be essentially different from His ordinary Habits," they advised, "and if his Majesty will resist the influence of those Ideas, which we have formerly had occasion to point out to him as erroneous, the Danger of a Relapse will be prevented. We therefore earnestly recommend to his Majesty that he will be graciously pleased to give Permission to the Physician who is about His Person to point out to Him from Time to Time anything which may seem to indicate the least Tendency to a Return of his Complaint that he may be immediately enabled by that Firmness of Mind, which we know his Majesty possesses to check and correct it."

Doctor Francis Milman had gone with the King to Weymouth, where he and Doctor Heberden attended alternately. Doctor Milman wrote Pitt on August 29, "I have the great satisfaction of informing you that appearances here have a more promising aspect than they did a few days ago. The Hurry occasioned by new objects—the agitation produced by numerous arrangements of a domestic kind, all of which the King thought proper to direct himself, even to the accommodation of a Page, seems to have abated and to have left his Majesty's mind in a State of greater Composure than it has for some time possessed. On the first sight of his Hanoverian troops He shed Tears but He said this morning He could now look at them without emotion and with a steady eye. On Saturday last I took the liberty of humbly representing it to the Queen to be the Opinion of my Brethren as well as myself, that it would be highly conducive to the perfect restoration of the King's Health—if every means of soothing His Majesty were adopted and if every inducement were held out to Him to pass as much of his time with pleasing and familiar Intercourse of the Family as possible. It is but an act of Justice to Her Majesty to say that she has been graciously pleased to condescend to this advice and that the King himself has lately spoken with great Complacency of her attention to Him. The new domestic arrangements upon the first arrival here were so numerous as to fatigue the King in the Day Time and the Thoughts of them at night appeared to break his Rest. The Pages informed me that he got up before it was day to give his orders and was sometimes so exhausted as to fall asleep at Breakfast." The physician then recounts that he insisted to the King that he have more rest. "Tho' he appeared at the Moment to resist the suggestion with some Displeasure," that night he remained in bed for nearly six hours.

George III's letters at this time indicate that he lacked all insight into his own condition. On August 26 he wrote from Weymouth, "As to Mr. Pitt's inquiries as to the King's health, it is perfectly good and the quiet of the place and the salubrity of the air must daily increase his strength. By the advice of Sir Francis Milman, who is here, the King will bathe in the tepid bath, in lieu of the going into the open sea. His Majesty feels this a sacrifice, but will religiously stick to this advice, but does not admire the reasoning, as it is grounded on sixty-six being too far advanced in life for that remedy proving efficacious." Apparently Doctor Milman realized that the soothing effect of the tepid baths was more needed than the stimulating effect of cold sea bathing.

Doctor Heberden, on relieving Sir Francis Milman, sent his detailed report to London on September 3. He found conditions definitely improved. He said, however, ". . . there is still a greater degree of hurry than is quite natural and a greater spirit of arrangement." He felt that these symptoms were not more marked than they had been when the patient left Windsor a week earlier. He believed that the most serious problem was the lack of rest, ". . . for I find he will not lie above 4 or 5 hours in bed, which is at once a sign, and a cause of his continuing unwell."

September was, if anything, worse than the summer months. The King's activity rate was geared to high speed. The only improvement seemed to be in his physical appearance. The Marquis of Buckingham wrote that he should have to amend the old aphorism to read, *mens non sana in sano corpore*. He quoted from one of his Weymouth informants, "It is impossible to describe half the hurry and irritation that constantly occurs, and unless it abates no frame can support it." Another correspondent reported that despite ". . . the heat and malaria of the Play House" he felt it wise for the Court party to attend regularly four times a week, because ". . . it is the only Place where His Majesty must of necessity be seated," and moreover "he sometimes takes a short nap there."

During that month Sir Robert Wilson, the military son of the portrait painter Benjamin Wilson, came to Weymouth to pay court to his sovereign. He recorded his impressions with rugged candor in a diary\* which has neither the studied reticence of the physicians' reports nor the graceful omissions of the politicians' writings.

\*The manuscript of this diary is in the British Museum.

On September 2, Wilson noted: "The King was apparently agitated and more rapid in his delivery than formerly. Toward evening he desired the Band to play some musick from Handel to which were the words, 'we never will bow down,' I presume to images for the King immediately cried out, 'Now let the Roman Catholicks come on. I wish they were all here'— He then lapsed into a devotional Reverie as might be inferred from the motions of his head and hands, but his Eyes were closed. . . .

*September 3.* "He nevertheless showed once much initiative and Harshness toward Princess Augusta who was taking care of Princess Sophia with her usual spasmodic complaint. . . . His appearance when in a phrenzied state might well be imagined. Again before many People, he abused General Dundas in coarse terms. . . . In his political observations he was also very indiscreet saying before the sailors, 'He hated all reforms—that he loved the Constitution with existing abuses, rather than if they were removed,' and he was very severe against Parliament for the Aylesbury Election Bill. Once at the Theatre one of the actors said on the Stage to another, 'You think yourself a great man because you represent all the silly fellows of the Shire.' The King clapped his hands and seemed delighted, but generally he slept there a great deal or talked so loudly as to disturb the performance. One ludicrous circumstance occurred there which occasioned much laughter—the Queen and the Princess Elizabeth retired from the Box while the King was asleep. The audience feared some of the princesses had been taken ill as all were not present. When the King awoke he roared out, 'My, did she not take with her all the playbills?' The House then knew the Queen had gone about *her own business* and it was convulsed. . . . I afterwards learned . . . that the King had abused Mr. Pitt violently and all his party. That the King was much attached to the Addingtons I had before an opportunity of ascertaining, for when that branch came to the Rooms, the King watched till Lord Hawkesbury was turned away and then went up to him and gave him and his former colleagues the most flattering compliments and which he on various occasions repeated. . . .

*September 14.* "On the evening of the 10th the King was so remarkably lively as to attract general notice. . . . For the next two days his physician Sir Francis Milman entertained very serious apprehensions as there are symptoms of returning Malady which engage more and more publick attention. It was a melancholy sight and most pain-



ful for all about him as they were thrown into continual embarrassments. The character of the King under this affliction seems totally changed. Occasionally he is more liberally, but in most cases malignantly, disposed—hating those whom he best liked—wishing the death of supposed enemies and taking into great aversion his old and faithful servants. He affects to be totally foreign which formerly he could not bear anyone to be and now stalks about with gauntlet gloves on his Hands and the biggest Hanoverian boots. . . .

*September 22.* "The King after dinner was more petulant and excited than ever. It was the anniversary of his coronation. He appeared in a Hanoverian General's Uniform. . . . Towards night he became quite childish and flattered much in his speech.

*September 30.* "Sir Francis Milman has warned the Queen he apprehends the King may have an attack of apoplexy. For the last week it appears he has been suffering much from severe headaches very dissimilar to his usual nervous affections, since with them he was very cold but now He feels during the attacks burning heat in Face and Hands. The King on the 26th had a fall off his horse but his headaches came on antecedently. . . .

*October 1.* "On board the Yacht the King came forward to main mast against which runs the Division of second Deck. Princesses Augusta, Amelia, Sophia, Lady Thynne, Lady C. Strangway and Mrs. Deas were sitting on sofas. The King commenced the conversation whilst taking some Papers out of a green box by observing, 'Mrs. Deas, you look very well, very well indeed, Dear lovely Mrs. Deas, what a pretty ass you have got. How I should like to pat (this word is more decent than the one he actually used and which would not bear repetition) such a pretty ass.' This was said twice in the same quaint manner and with a voice that reached every part of the ship. The confusion of the Princesses, Ladies and Gentlemen, Officers and Sailors was indescribable.

"Some of the sailors tumbled over one another into the Hatchway unable to restrain their Fits of Laughter. . . . This explosive outburst of the King proceeded from the fact he had overheard Mrs. Deas in the morning saying to a pretty Little Donkey much admired at Weymouth, 'Oh dear pretty little ass, come here that I may pat you. How I should like to pat you, dear pretty ass.'"

During the attack of 1804, it became evident that a serious rift had

developed between King George and Queen Charlotte. Just when the break commenced is difficult to determine, though the cause of it was more or less obvious. Manic patients are often subject to excessive erotic interest, and King George was no exception to the rule. During the trying illness of 1788 and the less severe attack of 1801, his sexual abnormalities were closely guarded from the public, so that it was comparatively easy for Charlotte to maintain her role as loyal wife and protector.

Now, in 1804, however, matters were different. There was only a short period of isolation, followed by a prolonged period of mental disorder during which almost no outside control was exercised. Moreover, George III was possibly experiencing that final thrust of heightened sexual pressure which attacks many men as they approach their senium. The combination was more than the Queen could tolerate. Information from numerous sources indicates that from the onset of the 1804 illness the Queen ceased being the King's marital partner.

Sir Robert Wilson was of the opinion that the Queen's refusal had antedated this illness. He wrote in his entry on September 8, 1804, their forty-third wedding anniversary, "At the Wedding Fete it was presumed the King would be allowed to sleep in the Queen's Apartment, which hitherto had not been the case for several years, but the usual precautions were taken to prevent his occupation of the Room. Those precautions are first the entrance of two German Ladies at an early hour; on the retirement of the Queen, two of the Princesses attend her and stay until the King withdraws. He sleeps in the next House, for he declares he never will have a separate bed in the same residence with her.

"The advice of the Physicians—the entreaties of the Ministers have all been in vain—the Queen is inexorable. The King frequently threatens to keep a mistress and several times has declared, 'since he finds Lady Yarmouth will not yield to his solicitations He will make Love elsewhere.' The morning after the fete the King was very unwell. One of the Princesses said, 'We have had quite a scene this morning with the King.'"

"The Queen Lives upon ill terms with the King," Mr. Abbot wrote in October, "they never sleep or dine together. All the books and pictures are removing from the Queen's House in London to Windsor Castle." In November Lord Granville Leveson-Gower gave his version of the royal domestic relations. "I have some more long details sent



“THE KING REWARDING THE INDUSTRIOUS HAY-MAKER  
NEAR WEYMOUTH”

Here is Farmer George on one of his democratic excursions during  
a summer vacation late in his life



"THE RECONCILIATION"

Gillray's engraving of 1804 quoted the Scriptural story of the Prodigal Son. The Queen shows her delight at the reuniting of her husband and her oldest son, but Pitt, directly behind the King, looks frankly skeptical

me of the dissensions between the King and Queen, and his determination of never sleeping again at the house call'd hers. His pursuit of Lady Pembroke is renew'd de plus belle, and with so much ardour and such splendid offers that I tremble for her Virtue,—ce seroit trop piquant de sacrifier les honneurs de 72 ans de bonne conduite à un galant de 68. But this is not all; there was some other Lady to whom he made urgent proposals of the same nature, and that, it is said, in presence of his daughter, before whom he often uses very improper language.”

According to Malmesbury, the information which he got from Mrs. Harcourt two months later showed that things were unchanged. “The Queen,” she reported to him, “will never receive the King without one of the Princesses being present; never says in reply a word; piques herself on their discrete silence; and, when in London, locks the door of her white room [her boudoir] against him.”

Serious and concerted efforts by the medical and political leaders to re-establish the old happy congeniality of the King and Queen met with little success. Men like Auckland pleaded for a better understanding between them to preserve “that admiration of private goodness and exemplary temper in domestic life which was very material to be preserved” and had been so notable between them for forty years. The destruction of this picture of ideal domesticity, which had contributed largely to the popularity of the King and Queen during their latter years, seemed to many Englishmen a sacrilege.

Despite the failure of the plans for reconciliation between the Prince of Wales and his father early in the summer, Pitt continued to try to bring them together. He was helped in this endeavor by Tierney, a member of the Opposition, with whom Pitt had fought a notorious pistol duel six years before. The meeting of the King and his son occurred finally on November 12. “This day,” read the court bulletin, “the long expected interview between the Sovereign and heir apparent took place at one o’clock, at Kew Palace. The scene is said to have been affecting beyond all description. . . .” Apparently, the Prince did not find it so affecting. Charles Fox recounted the Prince’s version to him: “There was no cordiality or pretended affection but common talk on weather, scandal, etc.—a great deal of the latter, as the Prince thought very idle and foolish in the manner, and running wildly from topic to topic, though not absolutely incoherent.” Nor does the King’s account of the interview which he sent to Caroline, the Princess of Wales, suggest that it was particularly moving.

"My dearest Daughter-in-law and Niece," he wrote on November 13, "Yesterday I and the rest of my family had an interview with the Prince of Wales at Kew, care was taken on all sides to avoid all subjects of altercation or explanation, consequently the conversation was neither instructive or entertaining, but it leaves the Prince of Wales in a situation to show whether his desire to return to his family is only verbal or real, which time alone can show; I am not idle in my endeavour to make enquiries that may enable me to communicate some plan for the advantage of the dear child you and me with so much reason must interest ourselves in and its effecting my having the happiness of living more with you is no small incentive to my forming some ideas on the subject, but you depend on their being not decided upon without your thorough and cordial concurrence for you as mother it is my object to support. Believe me at all times, my dearest Daughter-in-law and Niece, your most affectionate Father-in-law and Uncle."

This formal reconciliation with the Prince had no important effect. Many hoped, because of the strong emotional bond between the Queen and the Prince, that he might be able to improve the relationship between his parents, but nothing came of these hopes.

Despite the continuance of an unusual degree of activity at Weymouth during October, there were evidences of gradual improvement in the King's mental condition. He was getting up between 5 and 6 A.M., and was mounted on his horse by 7. The major part of each day was spent in short sea excursions on his yacht. He attended theatre five or six nights a week. Although this routine would be exhausting to most people, George III regained his weight and physical strength on it. He was a man with an incredible amount of energy when in good health and such a schedule was not much more active than his normal routine.

The return to London from Weymouth occurred early in November, 1804. Although things went considerably better during the winter, the monarch was still far from well. Thomas Erskine,\* the great barrister, gave his views on George III's condition to Lord Glenbervie, when he met him in Pall Mall on December 21. Glenbervie recorded that Erskine ". . . said he knew the King to be still insane; that he has been counsel in all the great questions of sanity which have been tried for the last twenty years, at the sittings, on his circuit, and as special counsel in all parts of the Kingdom, and has bound up all his notes on this

\*Four years before he had brilliantly defended the insane war veteran, James Hadfield, when he was tried for shooting at the King in Drury Lane Theatre.

subject into one large book, with indexes and references. That he therefore knows more of this distemper than all the King's physicians put together. That the King certainly recovered completely in 1788. . . . That he then retained no morbid ideas but now his mind continues to dwell on such ideas, capricious resentments, hatred and fancies for and against persons and former habits, against the Queen for instance, Buckingham House, etc; and against Doctor Simmons and Doctor Willis, which is a circumstance which did not exist on his recovery in 1789. That he knows the King said last Friday he should in the Spring invade Hanover in person, at the head of the Blues and Staffordshire Militia." Apparently the attitude of omniscience which the lawyers and judges of today often assume toward psychiatric problems is firmly established on ancient English precedent.

## CHAPTER XXV



“ . . . Ye see, o friends,  
*How many evils have enclosed me round;  
Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,  
Blindness; . . .*”

MILTON, *Samson Agonistes*

**G**EORGE III BEGAN TO COMPLAIN about his failing vision during the summer of 1804. On November 1 of that year Rose noted in his journal, “His Majesty told me he had nearly lost the sight of his right eye, and that it was with great difficulty he could read a newspaper by candlelight with any spectacles he could get.” After he had composed the speech with which he was to prorogue Parliament in January, 1805, he had it printed in large letters, so that he would be able to read it.

He was at this period still in the manic state produced by the attack of 1804, so that the symptoms of his approaching blindness did not depress him as they would ordinarily have done. On the day of the opening of Parliament, as he drove through the crowded London streets, he turned suddenly to his Lord in Waiting. “I shall begin my speech today ‘My Lords and Peacocks,’” he said gaily. And though he did not carry out this particular threat, he did appear in a ludicrous periwig which no sovereign in command of his senses would have dared to wear. The whole ceremony proved to be a great strain on his excited mind, and served to aggravate his disorder considerably.

As soon as the ordeal was over he rushed posthaste to Blackheath, to visit the Princess of Wales. The Princess, who was not altogether averse to exaggerations, confided to one of her intimates that, “. . . he threw her down on one of the sofas, and would have ravished her, if, happening to be without a back, she had not contrived to get over it on the other side.”

The King’s highly erotic behavior continued. He had carefully selected the Dowager Lady de Clifford as the Governess for his little



granddaughter, Princess Charlotte. During February, ". . . she took the child to see her Grandfather, when after some conversation he sent the child out of the room, wanting to speak to the Governess; but instead of speaking he embrac'd her repeatedly, much to her dismay and consternation." Shortly thereafter, the Queen gave a party, at which George III paid ardent suit to his old love, Lady Pembroke. "The King persisted in talking to Esther\* so much that the Queen, after repeatedly tapping him on the shoulder and trying to draw off his attention, at length begg'd Esther to come into another room with her. To Esther's son he gave a large Diamond George, and he has just sent him a second, also in Diamonds but smaller because he wish'd him he said, to come to the Ball tomorrow, and he would want a lighter George to dance in." This prodigal bounty was as foreign to the sovereign's normal nature as was his wantonness.

Fortunately, however, his ebullient spirits also expressed themselves in more acceptable forms. On February 25 he gave a great ball with four hundred guests for the younger Princesses. He himself went to Eton to invite eighty of the scholars to attend. Two months later, on St. George's Day, a regal celebration of the installation of the Knights of the Order of the Garter was held at Windsor Castle. Because of his great interest in forms and ceremonies, George III revived some of the ancient honorable customs. A baron of beef weighing 162 pounds, the cooking of which he himself superintended, was brought in on a great silver platter. Unfortunately, on this occasion too he displayed that lack of nice restraint which is so characteristic and disturbing a symptom in hypomanic conditions. He carried his zeal for ancient ceremony to the point of making himself ridiculous in a great antique wig. "Never shall I forget the consternation, if not the horror, which the sight of the King produced," wrote one of the guests. "He too wore the purple robe and the plumed cap, but had on his head an enormous, well powdered, flowing wig, such as we may see in some old pictures as worn by the Lord Chancellors and Judges of those days. The ends of the wig flowed down his shoulders, and nearly covered his chest. This added to an unusually red and anxious face, gave an immediate impression that nothing but insanity could have led to the King appearing as he then did."

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deteriorating rapidly, but the circumstance had no effect on his spirits. In June, however, the restlessness and boisterous state of mind he had displayed for many months gave way suddenly to a period of dejection, with a greatly diminished energy level. A new misunderstanding arose between Addington and Pitt. This was a situation to which the King had already been sensitized and which had played a dominant role in precipitating the 1804 attack. Their quarrel threatened the stability of the government. But the King grew so depressed over his failing vision that even serious affairs of state became secondary to it. On June 24, 1805, the ophthalmologist John Wathen Phipps\* was secretly summoned.

After Mr. Phipps' first visit to the King, he reported that the King's eyes were ". . . in a dreadful state, encreas'd by the irritation of his nerves and heat in his blood." George III was suffering from cataract, an hereditary affection from his paternal ancestors.† He dreaded an operation, and as soon as the examination had been made asked how long he could retain his sight without the use of surgery. "Until the cataracts are completely formed," Phipps answered, "which might be sooner or later, but certainly not longer than twelve months." "The operation is useless," the King responded gloomily. "I shall not be alive twelve months hence."

In his first communication on the subject, the Marquis of Buckingham wrote to Lord Grenville, ". . . a gutta serena [optic atrophy] was feared." Subsequently, on June 27, he reported, "It is however more than probable that the disorder is completely and indisputably cataract, which has wholly seized one eye, and partially the other. His head is said not to be affected, but his despondency and irritation are stated to me to be very great indeed." He reports Phipps as saying ". . . that there would be no danger in removing them by operation." The Marquis then comments, ". . . all this may be true, but it is equally so that the absolute quiet of mind and body to which the King must submit when he is couched will . . . utterly and rapidly destroy the little remains of sanity that at present exist. Old Lady Bath passed this week at Windsor and says that the King, putting the hand on one eye,

\*Mr. Phipps was a man of great ability, who stood in the front rank of his profession. As a practitioner he was far more successful than his brilliant Quaker competitor, Thomas Young. The Royal Infirmary, founded in 1805, is said to be the outgrowth of Phipps' philanthropic work.

†George II had begun to lose his sight a few years before his death and three of George III's sons suffered from cataracts.

said, now I can only see a very dim haze of light, and then moving the hand to the other eye said, now I see that something is between me and the light, but I cannot distinguish your figure or features; and what is extraordinary my spectacles do not help me."

Immediately after Phipps began his attendance, the King's eyes were bandaged and medicaments applied. The treatment produced a severe conjunctivitis. The inflammation of the eyes created a momentary false optimism in the royal patient. The King announced that his vision would be better after he had been "... confined for four days by physic for his eyes which are so much inflamed that he could not see out of them."

After further observation Mr. Phipps decided that the cataracts would not be ripe enough for operation before the fall. On July 10, two days before the departure of the royal family for their summer sojourn at Weymouth, Phipps demonstrated to the King "... a gentleman whom he had lately couched of both eyes, at an interval of three weeks, and with perfect success." Soon after the arrival at Weymouth it was reported that the King still "... had a considerable degree of inflammation in his eyes, which had a little abated the two following days; that, however, he still rode out, though only a foot-pace, and immediately preceded by a groom; and went to the play, which hitherto was not crowded or hot; that Phipps had arrived and had said that the inflammation might produce much good or evil; that he had applied leeches, and said he would remain with his Majesty until the inflammation was removed." The royal spirits were described as "very low."

Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Taylor of the Duke of York's Office was at this time appointed personal secretary to the King. It had been frequently suggested to George III that he have some one assist him in his work, but he had always refused, insisting on reading all of the communications sent him, writing all of his own letters and even making copies with his own hand to file away. His orderliness and his amazing industry were nowhere more clearly evident than in his correspondence. He was one of the most voluminous letter writers in history, writing with the same extraordinary precipitation which characterized his speech. Fortescue has filled six large volumes with his correspondence from 1760 to 1783, and many of the letters written during that period are not included. He often made several drafts of important communications before he was satisfied.

For a short time his sight seemed better,\* and he was pathetically optimistic. On August 10, he wrote to Bishop Hurd, ". . . no one ever experienced a more striking instance of the protection of Divine Providence than I have done. The cataract was first formed in the left eye, and much advanced in the right one, but by an unexpected inflammation in the left eye this had dispelled the apparent mischief in that eye; and that in the other also diminished, so that Mr. Phipps seems sanguine that he will affect a cure." His daughter, Elizabeth, was far less hopeful. She wrote Lady Harcourt in July, "I fear the dear King's eyes are very little better, tho' He flatters Himself they are; and his anxiety to see, poor man, makes him try I fear, many experiments which are not right. . . . You may believe what it is to us to see one who was so active, literally grope about; for too much light perfectly blinds him. He wears a shade over his eyes, which at times he throws back and does not always attend to; but his resignation is really wonderful. At times it makes him low; but for the sake of his family he keeps up his spirits wonderfully, in the hope that when the operation is over, He may get perfectly well again."

The King continued his optimistic rationalizations. On September 5 he wrote Bishop Hurd, ". . . objects growing brighter, though not as yet much clearer." But he admitted in a letter to Pitt, dated September 16, "His Majesty's sight will not allow him to add more as though he gains some ground, he can neither read what is written to him nor what he writes." The poor man could not comfortably adapt himself to the use of a secretary. His personality was so rigid that to make a drastic readjustment in his routine was nearly impossible. He bore the affliction itself with noble resignation, interpreting it as part of the Divine Plan. His daughter, Princess Mary, wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth in the middle of October, "His patience and resignation under so severe a calamity is a striking proof of his angelic disposition and a striking lesson to all around him."

In November, 1805, there was again a period of improvement in vision. He was able to play Commerce, a card game, with the aid of spectacles. According to Lord Gower, he found travelling in the evening from London to Kew quite painful, ". . . yet from a foolish vow

\*There is frequently the paradoxical circumstance that as cataracts grow more dense, vision is temporarily improved. The partially clouded sectors of the lens distort the light rays so that they interfere with the function of those sectors not yet seriously involved. When these more affected areas become entirely functionless, sight is improved.

he made during his illness never to sleep in town, his scruples are so great that he cannot be prevailed upon to do so, and there is a doubt whether the uneasiness he expresses at what he calls perjuring himself, will not do him more harm than the journey." Doubtless, the increased discomfort of this evening journey resulted from riding toward the light of the setting sun. The royal aversion to sleeping in London was probably connected with his prejudice against the Queen's House, or as it was often known, Buckingham House, after Queen Charlotte's refusal to share his bed.

George III's visual acuity was for some time extremely variable.\* During the years 1805 and 1806 the advisability of an operation was under continual discussion by the physicians, the ministers, and the members of the royal family. Couching, the dislocation of a lens that has become opaque, had for half a century been well established. By 1765 Jacques Daviel, the originator of the modern method of operation, had reported 434 extractions with only 50 failures. Phipps and many other English surgeons were entirely competent to perform such an operation. But in the pre-anæsthetic era surgical procedures of all kinds were nervously shocking, despite the incredible speed with which surgeons worked.† The cataract operation was complicated by a peculiarly nerve-racking post-operative convalescence. The patient of a century ago was required to be perfectly still in a dark room for one month. Unless George III had been placed under very large doses of opiates, this would have been impossible. Since he seemed, on the whole, to accept this new affliction with a remarkable degree of resignation, it was felt wiser to leave well enough alone. Some of the physicians believed that the restriction of activity and the removal of visual stimuli might even improve his mental stability. Queen Charlotte was among those who opposed operating; apparently the King himself was uncertain as to the best policy to follow.‡

The closing months of 1805 found the King in a comparatively

\*Sufferers from cataract find that their vision is greatly affected by even small changes in light. With cataracts primarily involving the central portion of the lens, a bright light is inefficient. It causes the pupils to contract and prevents the functioning of the peripheral portions of the lens which are less affected. It seems quite probable that George III had central (nuclear) cataracts and that for this reason he wore wide-brimmed hats and eye shades.

†The great surgeon William Cheselden extracted a bladder stone 54 seconds after putting his knife to the skin.

‡This doubt persisted many years; even in 1811, during his psychosis, he repeatedly said that if his "Liza" approved he would still submit to operation.

quiet mental state. There was little or no suggestion of manic activity. He enjoyed long periods of normal mood and behavior, punctuated by short intervals of depression.

But the year of 1806 opened with an event of tragic significance for England. When Parliament was prorogued by commission, because of the King's blindness, Pitt was prostrated by a fatal illness. He had always been very frail. His close friend and physician, Sir Walter Farquhar, had been concerned about him for many months and had counselled him to remain in Bath to drink the waters and rest as much as possible. Diagnosed as suffering from heart disease, he had been advised early in March to live on one floor of his house, to save himself climbing the steps. But Pitt would not relax his efforts; he had a sense of duty that was as relentless as his sovereign's. He could not rest when the fiend Napoleon was stalking across the whole of Europe. The death of Nelson had a profound effect on him. He had boasted of his ability to sleep, however gravely he was troubled; but the night he heard that news he paced the floor. Napoleon's triumphs, first at Ulm and then at Austerlitz, were the final blows. Pitt died on January 23, 1806, at the age of forty-six, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his entrance into Parliament.\* As he died, he gasped: "Oh, my Country, how I leave my Country!"

George III was deeply stricken by his minister's death. For twenty years, through storm and fair weather, their destinies had been closely linked. The royal family was afraid that the loss of Pitt would unbalance the King's none-too-stable mind. But, surprisingly enough, George bore himself with great composure. On the eve of Pitt's death, Princess Amelia wrote to her friend, Mrs. Villiers: ". . . The dear King behaves like an Angel. I own I am in agonies. I do not fear the present moment so much as the future, for you know with him distress blazes out long after the blow." And just after the news was received at Windsor, she wrote again, "He is most deeply hurt and affected, but shines, if possible, in this trying moment more than ever. . . . He dreads having one of his illnesses, and I own I feel miserable." For two days he would see none of his ministers. But then he energetically turned his attention to business. Disheartening and tragic events were not the stimuli that produced his serious psychiatric disturbances, particularly

\*In all probability the severe joint pains that he suffered at fourteen, and which had been diagnosed as gout, were due to rheumatic fever. With this infection he no doubt developed valvular heart lesions. That he contracted a terminal bacterial infection of these already diseased heart valves seems more than likely.

if they came swiftly. Nelson's tragic end,\* Ulm, Austerlitz, and even William Pitt's death had no serious mental repercussions.

King George readily assented to Parliament's appropriating £40,000 to pay Pitt's debts. The task of forming a Ministry was difficult. Pitt had left no political heir and George III had had his fill of Addington, now Lord Sidmouth. Lady Bessborough described the boiling of the political pot two days after Pitt's death: "Friday night Lord Hawkesbury went to the Duke of Portland and was closeted for two hours with him (the two such heads could not fail of producing great wisdom): in the morning the Duke of York and one of his Brothers also closeted the poor old Duke, who is half dead in consequence. Lord Hawkesbury was shut up with the King for three hours, and it is everywhere reported is Minister. . . . Since I wrote Lord Hawkesbury has seen Bess and own'd to her that he was Minister for two hours, but had not the courage to go on: that Lord Mulgrave press'd the King to let them try. But this plan was given up, and he would not even hint what was to supply its place. . . ."

George had to resign himself to calling on the Opposition Whigs to take over the government. It was a bitter dose to swallow. For some time he hesitated and then he resolutely determined his course of action. On January 27 he sent for one of the Whig leaders, Lord Grenville—another Prime Minister's son, but as unlike Pitt as their fathers were unlike. Grenville came bluntly to the point, "I can do nothing without consulting Mr. Fox," he said. To which the monarch made the astonishing reply, "I suppose so, and I meant it to be so." In order to temper Sidmouth's† jealous resentment, Grenville had to take him into the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal.

Princess Augusta, George III's second daughter, has left an interesting account of her father's state of mind at the time of this political crisis. "At the period of Mr. Fox's return to power," she wrote, "the King—then in full possession of his faculties—showed for several days considerable uneasiness of mind. A cloud seemed to overhang his spirits. On his return one day from London the cloud was evidently

\*The King was averse to giving England's greatest naval hero a public funeral. Because of Nelson's affair with Lady Hamilton and because he had accepted an order from the King of Naples without gaining his sovereign's permission, George had been personally cold toward him even after the Battle of the Nile.

†Canning, in his caustic comment, made use of Viscount Sidmouth's nickname before he was made a peer: "The Doctor is like the measles—everybody has him once."



removed, and his Majesty on entering the room where the Queen and Princess Augusta were, said he had news to tell them. 'I have taken Mr. Fox for my Minister, and on the whole am satisfied with the arrangement.' When Mr. Fox came into the closet for the first time, his Majesty purposely made a short pause, and then said—'Mr. Fox, I little thought you and I should ever meet again in this place. But I have no desire to look back upon old grievances, and you may rest assured that I shall never remind you of them.' Mr. Fox replied—'My deeds, and not my words, shall commend me to your Majesty.' It was characteristic of George III that he showed great mental unrest until he had resolved his perplexity. But when his doubt was dispelled, he could face the problem squarely and with equanimity.

Fox, the radical leader and the inveterate foe of George III, became, in office, a respectful and conscientious servant of the Crown. Only a year before, he had insisted upon agitating the question of Catholic Toleration. Once in the Cabinet however, he opposed bringing the matter forward in fear of precipitating a mental illness in his sovereign. Amazing as it seems, Charles Fox's energy at the Foreign Office produced from George III the merited testimonial that the office had never before been conducted in such an orderly and efficient manner. How close a relationship they would have developed we can never know, for Fox died in September, 1806, of cirrhosis of the liver. The King himself, on hearing the news, bluntly remarked, ". . . little did I think I should ever live to regret Mr. Fox's death."\*

The Prince of Wales, who had been in almost daily attendance during Fox's final illness, wrote Lord Grenville beseeching him to get his father's permission to attend Fox's funeral. Although King George had come to recognize some of Charles Fox's abilities, he could not admire him. The thought of Fox's funeral procession to Westminster must have recalled to the King that triumphant parade after Fox's momentous political victory a quarter of a century earlier, in which his son had participated. The memory of that painful occasion had burned its way into the mind of George III and not even death could make him forget his bitterness. He forbade his son's attendance at the funeral. The Prince had discontinued overt rebellion against his royal parent since their reconciliation in 1804, and obediently remained away.

During 1806 there were loud and persistent rumors of the immo-

\*Thurlow died one day before Fox. George III had reached an age when the death of an associate brings frightening thoughts—less than a week later he made a new will.

ality of Princess Caroline, the discarded wife of the Prince of Wales. Despite the fact that the King himself had been passionately attached to her during his last two illnesses, he now consented to an official inquiry into her scandalous behavior. He allowed four members of the Ministry to undertake what came to be known as "the Delicate Investigation." Their findings were favorable to the Princess in that they determined that William Austin, adopted by her, was not her illegitimate child. They did, however, find that she had been indiscreetly amiable with at least three gentlemen, among them Lawrence, the portrait painter. The King, when in mental equilibrium, was a strong conventional moralist. No doubt he recalled only vaguely his own amorous interest in the Princess a year before. After the report of "the Delicate Investigation" was completed, he wrote, ". . . there have been circumstances of conduct on the part of the Princess which His Majesty never could regard but with serious concern." From then on Caroline was no longer regarded as a member of the family. He told the Queen that ". . . the Princess could not be received as an Intimate in his Family and no nearer intercourse could he admit than outward marks of Civility." This turn of affairs had one fortunate result; it brought the Prince of Wales and his father closer to each other.

Lord Grenville's "Ministry of All the Talents" lasted little more than a year. It did succeed in effecting the abolition of the slave trade. And it passed Windham's Army Act—a measure substituting limited service for life service—over the strong opposition of the King and the Duke of York, Commander-in-Chief of the Army. But then it foundered on the familiar but dangerous reef of Catholic Toleration.

On February 8, 1807, the Cabinet proposed to the King that Catholic officers of the Army, serving in England and Scotland, be permitted to rise to the rank of colonel. Such an act had been passed in regard to Catholics serving in the Irish Army in 1793. It seemed in itself innocent enough. But the King, who had become mentally anaphylactic to the question of Catholic Toleration, wrote the Home Secretary of State that he could not assent to such a measure. Then, under the suasion of the Cabinet, there occurred what in the King's long life was a rare phenomenon—a change of mind. Two days later he wrote a letter reversing his stand. This communication had a forceful conclusion: "While, however, the King so far reluctantly concedes, he considers it necessary to declare that he cannot go one step further; and he trusts that this proof of his forbearance will secure him from

being at a future period distressed by any further proposal connected with this question."

It was only natural that the King should plead for relief from any further distress concerning state matters—on this question or any other. For by this time he was, to all intents and purposes, a completely blind old man. When his sister, the Duchess of Brunswick, came to England to live, he burst into tears at not being able to see her. How much more helpless he must have felt when confronted with the necessity of carrying on his royal duties from behind his curtain of darkness.

Still he would not renounce his prerogatives as King. On March 3, the ministers laid before him an amended and more radical bill, which provided that dissenters of all kinds could hold a general's rank in the Army. They did not tell him it had been revised, and either out of pride or lassitude, he did not ask to have it read to him. He simply returned it to the ministers, and they assumed that he had no objections to the measure.

Sidmouth insisted to the Cabinet that his Majesty had been caught unaware and, over the objections of his colleagues, presented himself to the King on March 4. When George learned of what had occurred he was "much disturbed and agitated." He had given his assent to a bill to which he was greatly opposed. Yet to admit his quandary would indicate that he was performing his royal functions incompetently. He felt relieved when Sidmouth said that he and Abbot, the Speaker of the House, would be among the Opposition. In bitter anger the King declared that he had been tricked by his ministers' lack of candor. Nevertheless, the bill was introduced.

Under these trying circumstances George controlled himself admirably. He met with his Cabinet on March 11, and his appeal was so affecting that they determined to withdraw the obnoxious bill. They so informed him on the 15th, in a minute signed by six members of the Cabinet in favor of Catholic Toleration. But the same minute also stated that if in the future there should be a "discussion of the Catholic petition in Parliament . . . an adherence in them all to their former opinions must naturally be declared." Two days later the King replied that he appreciated their having dropped the bill, but he warned them ". . . that he cannot ever agree to any concessions to the Catholics which his confidential servants may in future propose to him; and that under these circumstances, and after what has passed, his mind cannot be at ease unless he shall receive a positive assurance from

them which shall effectually relieve him from all future apprehensions." He could not live equably, faced by uncertainty.

The ministers met immediately and drafted a non-conciliatory reply: ". . . they beg leave to represent to Your Majesty, that at the time when Your Majesty was graciously pleased to call them to your councils no assurance was required from them inconsistent with those duties which are inseparable from that station. Had any such assurance been then demanded, they must have expressed with all humility and duty the absolute impossibility of their thus fettering the free exercise of their judgment. Those who are entrusted by Your Majesty with the administration of your extensive empire, are bound by every obligation to submit to Your Majesty, without reserve, the best advice which they can frame to meet the various exigencies and dangers of the times." Certain members of Grenville's own faction were opposed to his stubbornly idealistic stand. Sheridan, who stood to lose his lucrative post as Treasurer of the Navy if the Cabinet were dissolved, spoke scathingly of his Prime Minister. "I have known many men knock their heads against a wall," he said, "but I never before heard of a man collecting bricks and building a wall for the express purpose of knocking out his own brains against it." Nonetheless, that was the precise course that Grenville pursued. Next day he reiterated his sentiments in his audience with the King. George III said quietly, "Then I must look about me." The Grenville Ministry was dissolved.

On the 19th, the King had a two-and-a-half-hour session with Lords Eldon and Hawkesbury and went over the entire controversy with them. They later said that ". . . they never saw the King more collected, more quiet, or more composed, and more cheerful." He directed them to ask the Duke of Portland to form a government, adding, "I have no restrictions, no exceptions to lay on the Duke, no engagements or promises. He may dispose of everything. . . ."

Lord Eldon, for whom the King had constantly maintained great respect and affection, had relinquished the Great Seal to Erskine when Grenville's Ministry came in. On its dissolution he was immediately restored to the Lord Chancellorship. One day later he recorded his impression of the King. "He considers the struggle as for his throne," said Eldon, "and he told me but yesterday, when I took the seal, that he did so consider it; that he must be the Protestant King of a Protestant Country, or no King. He is remarkably well—firm as a lion—placid and quiet, beyond example in any moment of his life . . . the old

ones [ministers] are satisfied that the King, whose state of mind they are always doubting, has more sense and understanding than all his Ministers put together; they leave him with a full conviction of that fact."

George III's reaction to the issue of Catholic Toleration in 1807 was in striking contrast to his reaction in 1801. In 1801 there had been a serious dilemma—should he violate his conscience or give up the man who could offer him more security than any other in all of England? The dilemma had precipitated a manic psychosis. In 1807 the decision was relatively simple: he was going to act like a King. He would adhere to his earlier stand. He was only giving up Grenville and his Ministry for Lord Portland. Charles Fox, the spearhead of the Opposition for a quarter of a century, was dead; and Sidmouth, Portland, Abbot, and Eldon would support him solidly. Instead of upsetting him, the crisis in 1807 seemed to give him new life.

## CHAPTER XXVI



*"I will have no council which I cannot change or remove, so long as I have my faculties to enable me to discharge my duties."*

GEORGE III

BY 1808, GEORGE III'S DAILY ROUTINE had undergone a marked alteration. No longer did he race his horse at a killing pace through thirty miles of open country in a morning. Instead, a groom led his mount sedately through the park, while attendants rode on either side ready to catch him if he nodded or his horse faltered. Public affairs claimed comparatively little of his time and energy—he was too busy learning to relax. He played countless games of chess with his equerries, and he played rather well, in spite of his blindness. Every morning he went to chapel with his faithful daughters and every evening they read to him for two hours or longer. Before he had lost his sight, he had no use for any of the novelists except Fielding. Now novels became his greatest diversion, and whenever one of his daughters read him a passage that reminded him of Fielding, his delight was almost childish.

The year 1808 passed uneventfully on the whole and the King grew heavier as the months passed. Most of the time he was in a good mood, though there were occasional short periods of depression. Those who attended him observed sadly that he was fading in strength of both mind and body. In March, 1809, the Marquis of Buckingham wrote, "The King, from various causes, is no longer that which the constitution supposes him to be, a King efficient to all functions of monarchy." The royal Dukes suggested to him that a permanent Council of Regency be named; but he dismissed the proposal. "I will have no council which I cannot change or remove," he said, "so long as I retain my faculties to enable me to discharge my duties."

Another ministerial crisis occurred early in the fall of 1809. Napoleon's march across Europe had brought him to Austria, and in order

to divert some of his strength away from the hard-pressed Austrians, the Walcheren expedition had been organized in England, under the command of Lord Chatham. But Chatham was an indolent and incompetent leader, and as early as July, reports began drifting in that his venture was proving a fiasco. His failure served to discredit the Duke of Portland's Ministry and was even held to be responsible for an apoplectic stroke suffered by the Duke on August 11, which incapacitated him permanently. As if this were not trouble enough for the Ministry, Canning and Lord Castlereagh\* became engaged in a bitter feud, with Castlereagh accusing Canning of plotting his dismissal. The two fought a duel on September 21, in which Canning was shot in the thigh—and then both of them resigned from the Cabinet.

George III grew panicky at the virtual crumbling away of his Ministry. He dreaded having to call on Grenville and Grey to join the government, knowing that if they came in they would again press the question of Catholic emancipation. He insisted that he would abdicate rather than permit Lord Grenville "to force his conscience."

The Chancellor, Lord Eldon, was constantly advising with the King during this period, and often wrote to Lady Eldon of his sovereign's precarious mental condition. "I had an audience of the King for a full hour," he wrote on September 21; "his agitation and uneasiness were such as have left me perfectly agitated and uneasy ever since I left him. . . . He would not decide what he would do, but said he should compose a letter at Windsor last night." And, on the following day, "We waited at our meeting to a late hour, but no paper came from the King. I infer from this that he is in a most unhappy state of difficulty, and knows not what to do; and I greatly fear that something of the very worst sort may follow upon the agitation." The King confided to some of his friends that Lord Grenville had grown more obnoxious to him than Fox had ever been. Yet he agreed to admit Grenville and Grey to the Cabinet if enough members of his old Ministry would remain, in order to give the new Ministry a clear anti-Catholic majority. But the Whig leaders would not join the government under such circumstances; and at length the old Ministry, with very few changes, decided to carry on under the leadership of Spencer Perceval.

Largely to divert the minds of the populace from the ill-fated mili-

\*This was thirteen years before Castlereagh committed suicide during a depression by cutting his jugular vein with a penknife.

tary expeditions, the leaders of the City arranged a great jubilee celebration on October 25, 1809, in honor of the beginning of the fiftieth year of George III's reign. Thanksgivings were offered up in all the churches, debtors were liberated from prison, and military delinquents were pardoned. The poor were feasted and clothed. All day the London streets were crowded with a gay throng of loyal subjects and at night there were elaborate illuminations and fireworks. The beloved and pitied old King offered up his prayers of thanks too; but only his religious resignation made him do so. The past had been harsh to him, and the future held little in store but sorrow.

George III's harassing political difficulties seemed always to be more than matched by his domestic trials. In 1809 there broke the infamous scandal of the Duke of York, the King's second and favorite son. Among the Duke's succession of mistresses there was a certain Mary Anne Clarke, wife of a stonemason. The affair had begun in 1803, just after the Duke had reached the "foolish forties"—a designation which in this instance seems peculiarly appropriate. Although a woman of very easy virtue, Mrs. Clarke possessed rare beauty and a nimble wit—a trait in which the Duke himself was so deficient that it held him spellbound. He had set her up in a house on Gloucester Street with twenty servants and, in order not to be separated from her when he went into the country for week ends, had taken a place for her at Weybridge, near his estate, Oatlands Park. But by 1806 his ardor had cooled and he began making regular visits to Mrs. Cary in Fulham, even neglecting to pay the £400 a year that he had promised to his former love.

Mistress Clarke was not slow to seek her revenge. As her agent she employed an ex-colonel of the Welsh Fusiliers named Gwilym Wardle, a politically ambitious and none too scrupulous member of the Opposition group. She told him a story of corruption in high places which was sure to create havoc in Parliament. On January 27, 1809, Wardle moved in the House of Commons that "a Committee be appointed to investigate the conduct of His Royal Highness, the Duke of York, in his capacity of Commander-in-Chief, with regard to appointments, promotions, exchanges, the raising of new levies and the general state of the Army." The King and his ministers were so incensed at what they considered the unfounded scurrility of the charges that they impulsively met Wardle's request for a private investigation with the counterproposal that the inquiry be public. The



Prince of Wales made one of his noble declarations of undying support to his persecuted brother, and just as characteristically sought cover when the enemy's fire grew too heavy. The King was deeply disturbed.

The investigation lasted seven weeks. The House was never so well attended. Seats in the gallery were at a premium. It was clearly developed that Mrs. Clarke, supported by her royal lover, had conducted a flourishing and well-organized business in all types of preferments, with special emphasis on Army promotions. She had a regular price schedule. A majority with full pay cost £2600, half pay £900; a captaincy with full pay £1500, half pay £700, etc. To the lady's credit let it be said that her motives were not purely mercenary, since she had induced the Duke to grant her favorite footman a commission. Although there was no evidence that bishoprics were sold at the figures that they brought in the good old days of George II—when his mistress, Lady Yarmouth, secured them for £5000—Mrs. Clarke did not consider church affairs beyond her talents.

While the Duke of York was the villain in this melodramatic farce, Mrs. Clarke was assuredly the heroine. She appeared before the House arrayed in the latest Paris modes. Her ability to parry the most savage thrusts of the Crown lawyers was superb. When she was bluntly asked, "Pray, Madam, under whose protection are you now?" she turned with downcast eyes toward the Chairman and demurely said, "At present, Sir, I believe I am under yours." When challenged to repeat a conversation that she had had in the lobby with a previous witness, she said softly, "I cannot tell you because it was indelicate." She became the toast of London. The Speaker of the House wrote in his diary, "The joke among the people in the streets is, when they toss up half pence, not to cry 'Heads and Tails,' but 'Duke and Darling.'" The House, in a generous mood, absolved the Duke of "personal corruption and connivance at the infamous practices disclosed by Mrs. Clarke," by a vote of 278 to 196. But unofficially the victory was with the clever lady. The Duke, having come through the ordeal as a badly singed cat, had to resign his command in the Army. George III's great partiality for his son kept him from admitting, even to himself, the seriousness of the revelations. With his daughter Augusta, he adopted the attitude that far too much had been made of the scandal. They soothed themselves by blaming others. She wrote at the time of the exposé, "I am also miserable to think that the Methodists are doing all the harm to him they can and there are many in this country, they are vile canterers, cheat-

ing the devil, praying with their mouths but denying in their hearts; and they think it will command popularity to condemn and abuse the Duke of York for what I dare say they do themselves." Just what activities the Methodists could have been engaged in that were analogous to those of the Duke remains unclear. At any rate, the whole grotesque situation must have been very painful to the King.

The celebrated bloody combat between the Duke of Cumberland, George III's fifth son, and his valet Sellis soon followed. One night in May, 1810, the residents of St. James's Palace were aroused from their sleep by horrible yells. They found the Duke in bed, so seriously slashed by sabre cuts about the head that a portion of his brain was actually exposed. In a near-by room lay his Corsican valet, Sellis, with his throat cut clear across, gurgling his last in a pool of blood. The coroner's jury promptly exonerated the Duke. The theory of the tragedy developed by the testimony was that Sellis had hidden himself in the Duke's room early in the night. When Cumberland retired, Sellis got hold of the Duke's regimental sword and attacked him so violently that he felt confident he had killed him. While stealing back to his own room Sellis heard the yells of his victim, and becoming panicky, he cut his own throat. No motive was ever brought out for the assault. Some insinuated that the Duke had made a homosexual attack on his valet; others, that Sellis had come upon the Duke in his wife's bed; and there was a widely accepted theory that the Catholic Corsican had become crazed by his master's anti-Catholic vituperations. The royal family, of course, unhesitatingly accepted the verdict of the coroner's jury that the valet had committed suicide.

But the populace accepted the less charitable versions, for the Duke of Cumberland, with his battle-maimed face, was one of the most unpopular men in all England. With little foundation, prejudice fashioned him into a veritable demon. The Press delighted in lambasting him. When some years later he nearly rode down two girls, walking along the Thames at Hammersmith, the *Times* published Tom Moore's poem on the subject:

"The Duke is the lad to frighten a lass,  
Galloping dreary Duke.  
The Duke is the lad to frighten a lass,  
He's an ogre to meet and the Devil to pass;  
With his charger prancing,

Grim eye glancing,  
Chin like a mufti,  
Grizzled and tufty,  
Gallopimg dreary Duke.

"Ye Misses, beware of the neighborhood,  
Of this gallopimg, dreary Duke.  
Avoid him all who see no good  
In being run o'er by a Prince of the Blood.  
And as no nymph is  
Fond of a grim phiz,  
Fly, ye new married,  
For crowds have miscarried,  
At sight of this dreary Duke."

During the summer of 1810 George III's health had been unusually good. Lord Walsingham wrote in early autumn, "If I had been asked to say when I had ever seen the King's mind stronger for accuracy, reasoning, judgment, and memory, I should have answered that it has been for the last four months." His blindness should have insulated him to some degree against the shocks of the world, but his curiosity and increasing suspiciousness made any concealment difficult. He followed every turn in the scandals connected with his sons. And it was impossible to keep from him the painful details of the last great tragedy of his life, the slowly progressive illness of his youngest child, Princess Amelia.

Amelia had been her father's favorite since the day she was born. George III had always loved small children, and as each new offspring was presented to him by his Queen, it took precedence over the others in the King's affections. Since Amelia was the youngest, she never lost her position as best beloved. Besides, she was in all respects a lovable person. She had always been delicate, with a fragile charm which contrasted happily with the heavy German robustness of the rest of the family. Much to her father's delight, she played prettily on the harpsichord, and every one who knew her was drawn to her.

In 1789, when she was fifteen, she had injured her knee, and serious complications had followed.\* From the meager data available concern-

\*For a long time she was under the care of the surgeon Keate. In a letter from Queen Charlotte to the Prince of Wales, the Queen said that, in addition to the usual local treatment, the surgeon had used emetics and electricity. Electricity was used extensively for orthopædic conditions during the last part of the eighteenth century.

ing the injury and Amelia's subsequent condition, the chances are that she developed tuberculosis of the knee. The long illness which eventually proved fatal was undoubtedly pulmonary tuberculosis. A year before her death, Glenbervie wrote, "Princess Amelia is now and has been for many months very dangerously ill. Her complaint is chiefly acute pain in the right side with also a bad cough. Sometimes her liver is said to be affected, at other times her chest and lungs. . . . A very eminent physician [Sir Walter Farquhar] but who does not attend her, told us the other day that from everything he had heard of her symptoms, he imagines both organs are affected and that the real malady is the family disease." By "the family disease" he meant scrofula and the other forms of tuberculosis.

During the last ten years of her life Amelia had been secretly betrothed to one of her father's equerries, General Charles Fitzroy. In a sense, the King himself was responsible for the alliance, since he had chosen Fitzroy to act as Amelia's special escort and protector, little dreaming that his daughter would fall in love with a commoner twenty years older than herself. But if the King remained naively unsuspecting, every one else at court knew of the affair between the equerry and the Princess. According to the Royal Marriage Act of 1772, Amelia could not marry her General without the King's consent. And that she would not ask for, first, because she knew it would be refused, and second, because she feared that the request might bring on a mental upset.

In 1808, when Amelia reached the age of twenty-five, it would have been legally possible for her to marry without her father's consent, provided that she first declared her intention to the Privy Council. But apparently she was too dutiful a daughter to proceed summarily; so she approached George III on the subject, in order to sound him out. He took her proposals with extremely bad grace, and for some months there was an open rupture between them. During that period she wrote both to the Chancellor and to her brother, the Prince of Wales, telling them she intended to marry Fitzroy. In her letter to the Prince, she spoke of George III as "my late father"—an index of her bitterness.

All this agitation must have helped to undermine Amelia's already delicate constitution. On August 25, 1810, she took to her bed and remained there until her death. Doctor Matthew Baillie, the foremost English clinician of the period, and Sir Henry Hallford, the chief Court physician, were in regular attendance. King George, the rift forgotten

in his anxiety over Amelia's health, hovered devotedly over her.

In October, her condition became critical and the sacrament was administered on three separate occasions. The King was beside himself. On his daily visits to the sickroom neither he nor Amelia was able to stop weeping, and every morning at early prayers, George gave way to loud laments over the fate of his beloved child.

A series of letters from Doctor Matthew Baillie to his devoted wife, Sophy, which were written from Windsor during October, shows how dependent was the King's health upon the fate of the Princess. It was an obsession with him. Unquestionably, she had become more dear to him than any one else in the world, for since the King's antagonism toward Queen Charlotte persisted, Amelia and her sister Mary had assumed many of their mother's functions in the care of their father.

"The Princess was a good deal worse yesterday," wrote Doctor Baillie on Tuesday, October 14, 1810, "and is today a little better. The anxiety of the King about her is extreme. He makes her an Angel, is always speaking of her. Often crying about her and has a report sent about her five or six times a day. If this continues long it must affect his health mentally." And two days later, "I have given up all hope of returning to Gloucestershire. Although the Princess is not worse, and certainly not likely to die at present, yet she has so twined herself round the King's mind, that to propose to leave her at present, would quite overpower him."

According to the Duke of Kent, Amelia made a general confession to the King sometime before her death, that "she had been guilty of great sins and wickedness, greater than his Majesty could believe, and requested that he pray for her." As her end drew near, the Princess ordered for her father a ring enclosing a lock of her hair and engraved with the words "Amelia" and "Remember me." Princess Mary feared the effect that such a gift might have on the King and begged Amelia not to present it, but the Princess was obdurate. "Pray wear this for my sake," she said as she slipped it on her father's finger, "and I hope you will not forget me." "That I can never do," sobbed the King, "you are grown on my heart." Amelia besought him not to grieve for her, but the poor old man was inconsolable.

There is no doubt that during the last stages of Amelia's illness the King was abnormally excited for brief periods. But the disorder was not clearly manifest until October 24. On that day he "broke out, as in

former instances, in most unfit language to the Princesses; and was giving away to them and others about him, many very valuable little articles, such as gems, etc., and turned away some of the pages capriciously." Doctor William Heberden, the younger, and Doctor Reynolds, both attending physicians during the 1804 illness, were called to join Doctor Baillie and Sir Henry Halford, who were already in residence at Windsor because of Princess Amelia's critical condition. Doctor Heberden prevailed on King George to lock up all his valuables in a drawer, entrusting the key to the Queen; and also to reinstate the pages he had removed.

October 25, 1810, marked the close of the Jubilee year. Queen Charlotte, who through years of persevering tenderness had tried to shield her husband at critical periods, seems at this point to have lost all perspective. In a foolhardy effort to convince the world that all was well with the King, she arranged a gala court celebration. George III was obviously in no condition to participate. Early that day he had been riding and was observed "talking so loud and fast as to be remarked at a considerable distance."

Certainly his heart was not in the celebration; for Amelia was dying. "I shall never forget," wrote one of the Princess's attendants, "the last evening of my seeing him. It was the anniversary of his accession. The whole family, except the Queen of Württemberg and my dear Princess Amelia were present when he entered the room, the Queen holding his arm. He called to him each of his sons separately, and said things to them equally sublime and instructive, but very unlike what he would have said before so many people had he been conscious of circumstances. As he went around the circle as usual, it was easy to perceive the dreadful excitement in his countenance. As he could not distinguish persons, it was the custom to speak to him as he approached, that he might recognize by the voice whom he was about to address. I forget what I said to him, but shall ever remember what he said to me: 'You are not easy, I am sure, about Amelia. You are not to be deceived, but you know that she is in no danger.' At that same time he squeezed my hand with such force that I could scarcely help crying out. The Queen, however, dragged him away." Here was tragedy in its purest form. The last public appearance of King George III; the mighty monarch of Great Britain on the gala night of his Jubilee—a blind old man struggling manfully to preserve his reason, as his beloved child was sinking to her death.

October 25 marked for the King one tragic anniversary. October 29 marked another. Twenty-two years before, at the onset of his manic attack in 1788, the leaders of the government had interviewed the King to determine whether he was competent\* to sign the commission to prorogue Parliament, and they had decided he was not. Now again, on October 29, 1810, Perceval reported to the Speaker of the House that the King's "... conversation was prodigiously hurried, and, though perfectly coherent, yet so extremely diffuse, explicit, and indiscreet upon all the most interesting subjects upon which he could have to open his mind; and, at the same time, so entirely regardless of the presence of all who were about him, that he was evidently labouring under a malady." In his opinion, George was not competent to sign the commission.

The degree of disorder had not yet become very marked. On October 31, two days before the Princess Amelia's death, George III dictated a letter to her expressing his satisfaction that she had received the Holy Sacrament that morning, and "had sought for comfort under her sufferings, where only it could be found, in religion."

The four physicians in attendance on the King were agreed that the attack would be mild and short, and that it would be unnecessary to employ restraint. Unfortunately, it soon became evident that the course of the disorder would not follow these sanguine predictions. Suddenly during the night of October 31, the patient grew extremely violent. This was followed on November 1 by a period of "debility and vacancy of mind." That night there was practically no sleep.

On November 2, Amelia's long struggle came to a quiet end. The Court mourned her death, but her devoted father was unaware of it. He was in a state of wild frenzy. The day was one of the worst he had experienced in any of his illnesses. The restraint of the strait-waistcoat had to be begun. Its use was continued without interruption for eleven days.

\*It was customary to require the King's signature to the Commission for Prorogation either on the morning Parliament convened or late on the preceding day.

## CHAPTER XXVII



*"His judgment is in eclipse."*

SIR HENRY HALFORD

THERE CAN BE LITTLE DOUBT that Amelia's fatal illness precipitated the 1810 psychosis. Doctor Matthew Baillie reached this conclusion at the onset of the disorder through his own daily observations; and there are abundant data to support him. George himself was aware that his daughter's condition threatened his mental health. He had told Princess Amelia some time before that he was afraid he should be so afflicted and "trusted God would give him strength to go through the trial."

A study of this attack reveals hidden psychological forces common to insanity in general. First came poignant mental anguish, and then—in an effort to destroy that anguish—a denial of the circumstance which had provoked it. In other words, George was at first distressed by Amelia's illness; and then, when his distress became more than he could bear, he sought to deny that she was in any danger. But when reality threatened George's ability to deceive himself by ordinary rationalization, the psychosis, with its irrationality, developed. He fled beyond the bounds of logic. He moved into a world in which his daughter's illness did not exist, so that when she died he was unaware of it. When the fact of her death finally penetrated his consciousness, there came the delusion that he could thwart fate by bringing the dead back to life. As is frequently true in such disorders, the King then drifted into that twilight zone where reality and delusion alternate.

In writing about this illness, Princess Elizabeth made an interesting observation on the causes of her father's various periods of mental disorder. "Aggravating subjects," she wrote, "have been the causes of his former illnesses, and this one is due to the over flowing of his heart for his youngest and dearest child—a child who had never caused him a pang and whom he literally doted on."



As we have observed in studying the earlier attacks, uncertainty and frustration were the two prime factors in inducing the psychosis. At first glance the cause of this 1810 attack does seem different in character from the others. Adversity, "acts of God," situations which he had not produced and could not control, he had always faced with fortitude. But in this case, the death of his daughter had served to destroy the precarious balance between sanity and madness.

Yet on closer analysis, we find that the demon of uncertainty was again a factor. Doctor Reynolds, who had attended the patient during the attacks of 1788, 1801 and 1804, makes this point clear in his testimony before the Lords' Committee on December 17, 1810. When asked his opinion of the cause of the illness he said, "I have no doubt that it arose from the excess of his Majesty's sensibility excited by the alternation of hope and despair, on account of the protracted sufferings and ultimate death of Princess Amelia."

At 2 A.M. on November 2, Doctor Samuel Foart Simmons, the psychiatrist who had been in charge during the 1804 attack and against whom the King and the royal family had formed a strong prejudice, was in desperation summoned. He arrived at Windsor with his son, who had become his professional assistant, and with four trained attendants. The Queen, on learning of Simmons' arrival at the castle, immediately wrote to the ministers that she did not wish him employed. He refused to attend the King unless his son were added to the staff and unless he were given what amounted to sole control of the patient. These requests were denied and he withdrew. That day two apothecaries who made a specialty of treating the insane were sent for as an emergency measure; one was employed in St. Luke's Hospital, the other had a small private institution at Kensington.

Despite the turmoil that the King's illness had created at the Court, its existence had not become generally suspected elsewhere. Rose remarked in his diary on October 30, "It appears to be most extraordinary that the King should have been deranged to such an extent, as he certainly has been for six days, without the public having the least intimation of it. Not an allusion of the most distant kind in any of the newspapers of today. In the *Morning Chronicle* it is stated that the King has had a cold, but that last night he was better."

The physicians decided to inform the King of Princess Amelia's death soon after its occurrence, feeling that the certain knowledge

would prove less upsetting to him than the belief that she was still waging a painful and hopeless fight against the inevitable. The news had little visible effect. For a full week after he was informed, George III did not mention Amelia. According to the Abbot diary, on November 2 and 3 "the violence of the disorder was at a horrible height." On the 4th, leeches were applied since the King bitterly fought all attempts to bleed him. His condition was aggravated by insomnia, and the pillow of hops, which had been introduced by Premier Addington during the 1804 attack, was again tried. From the 2nd to the 7th there was a continual struggle to get the patient to take nourishment. Magnesia was the only thing he would take by mouth during this period. His pulse was elevated only while he was overactive—much of the time it was below eighty. On November 6, Doctor Robert Darling Willis\* was engaged as psychiatrist on the attending staff. Although the King had been promised in 1801 that he should never again be put under the care of the Willises, the Queen was persuaded by the ministers that necessity absolved her from keeping her word. George III disliked all the Willises, but he preferred Robert to his elder brother, John.

On November 7 and 8, the King slept for only thirty minutes out of the total of 48 hours.† He was in such a disturbed state for three days that he did not realize that one of the Willises was attending him, and even after he made the discovery he showed no particular resentment. During the week between November 10 and November 17, he averaged two hours of sleep in twenty-four. However, on November 11, his wild

\*A young son of the Reverend Francis Willis, who had died three years before. The composition of the medical staff during the 1810 attack has been memorialized by the epigram which an Eton scholar is said to have written on a window at Windsor:

"You may send, if aught should ail ye,  
To Willis, Heberden or Baillie;  
All exceeding skillful men,  
Willis, Baillie, Heberden;  
But doubtful which most sure to kill is,  
Baillie, Heberden, or Willis."

Apparently, working Halford and Reynolds into his rhyme was more of a challenge than his Muse could meet.

†This clinical material has been culled from a manuscript folio volume in the Royal Archives of Windsor Castle called "The Progress of the Symptoms of the King's Illness Since November 1810 Taken From the Reports of the Attending Physicians." It is an important source-book, furnishing much more detail than can be found in the official bulletins issued twice daily by the physicians.

excitement abated. He said he knew he had been ill, but had no idea how long his disorder had lasted. He also mentioned that this was the fourth\* period in his life during which he had lost track of time.

Now that he had returned temporarily to the world of reality, he interested himself in the affairs of his family and his kingdom. He was aware of the complications that must have arisen over the prorogation of Parliament. He was fully sensible of Amelia's death and wept bitterly over his lost daughter. He inquired whether her funeral had taken place and gave detailed orders concerning her household. He said he knew that her death had caused his illness. He busied himself "in providing for the dismissal and remuneration of all persons belonging to the Princess Amelia's establishment, which, he said, he was the more desirous of doing, as he could then look upon the whole event as a matter that might have happened ten years ago."

By the terms of her will Amelia had made General Fitzroy her residuary legatee, thereby causing great consternation in the royal family. The Prince of Wales cajoled, flattered and even made false promises to Fitzroy, so that he nominally resigned his appointment for the sake of public opinion. The *Gentleman's Magazine* announced, "The Prince of Wales and the Duke of Cambridge are the Executors of her will which was opened on the 4th instant. The Prince, the residuary legatee, has very handsomely presented her jewels, etc., to the Princess Mary her favorite sister. She had directed them to be sold to defray her debts; but the Prince has taken those wholly on himself." As a matter of fact, the Prince seems to have manipulated things so that Fitzroy got nothing, despite the fact that he had loaned Amelia £5000 a short time before her death. That the Queen felt in duty bound to communicate the contents of Amelia's will to the King is a striking revelation of her conscientiousness. She anxiously awaited a lucid interval during his psychosis to apprise him of it. Sir Henry Hallford, who was not only a capable physician but a medical courtier of the first rank, was selected to be his informant. He performed his task with exemplary tact, the patient receiving the disclosure with apparent calmness. There was considerable curiosity as to what reprisals the King might make on General Fitzroy. He was not demoted as many had predicted, but merely dismissed from the household staff. It soon became apparent that the completion of these tasks had not dimmed the vividness of

\*Apparently during his first illness in 1765 he had not been disturbed enough to be disoriented.

King George's grief. And insanity once more gained the upper hand.

Doctor Robert Willis as the psychiatric specialist naturally played the leading medical role in the case. Although his degree of dominance was hardly comparable to that of his father during the 1788 disorder, we find it reported at Court that "Willis is very angry with the other physicians, whom he charges with impeding the recovery, by interfering too much and conversing" with the King. Two weeks after coming on the case, Willis discontinued the daily visits by the entire medical staff in a body, feeling that this practice confused and excited the patient. As time wore on he became, to all intents and purposes, the sole director of treatment.

In comparing the clinical data of the 1810 illness with that of 1788, it is seen that the pulse rate was slower in 1810, probably because age and blindness had retarded the King's physical activity. Warm sedative baths were used no more frequently in the later than in the earlier illness, despite the fact that they seemed always to prove efficacious. In the twenty years that had elapsed between these two major attacks, no important changes in treatment seem to have been developed. Physical restraint, emetics and blistering were administered less frequently in the 1810 illness. Purgatives and opium were used to about the same extent.

The first public examination of the physicians was held before the Privy Council, in the Cockpit at Whitehall on November 28 and 29. Lord Camden, the Lord President of the Council, announced to the seventy-five members present that the Council would adhere strictly to the precedents laid down in 1788. All of the physicians testified that they considered complete recovery probable and that there had been real improvement after November 20. Doctor Baillie freely admitted that although he "had been in business for twenty years" his experience with mental disorders had not been extensive. He said, however, that he considered the outlook for recovery particularly favorable because he could perceive no failure in the patient's intellectual faculties. He regarded the disorder as similar to that under which George III had previously labored and not, as one might fear from his advanced age, a senile psychosis, from which recovery was impossible. None of the physicians would publicly hazard an opinion as to the probable duration of the illness. During the first week Rose made private inquiry from three physicians in attendance as to its probable duration. He found that "Doctor Baillie thinks the malady is likely to last some

months; Sir Henry Halford thinks not so long; and Doctor Heberden that it may pass over in a short time."

December started off auspiciously. Lord Bathurst wrote on the 3rd that the physicians were greatly encouraged by "the long interval of quiet. There continue, however, strong symptoms of disorder, but his Majesty corrects himself frequently, and almost always allows others to correct him on these occasions. He is fully aware of what is going on." On the 4th and 5th he was surprisingly well; and his ministers entertained no doubt of his holding a council and proroguing Parliament. He began taking his food satisfactorily. From November 30 to December 5 he had four to five hours sleep every night. On December 6 there was a marked increase in unfavorable symptoms. Sir Henry Halford wrote the Prince that there was no sleep whatever during the night of the 5th. Of the day itself he reported, "The King has been talking incessantly, in a mild and gentle tone certainly, but as there has been no interruption or intermission to his discourse it must necessarily have been desultory and erroneous." This relapse lasted until December 11, when there was again a period of improvement. The patient was out of restraint for a total of less than twenty-four hours from December 6 to December 12.

On December 14 and 15 the physicians were interrogated at length before a committee of twenty-one from the House of Commons. A similar inquiry was continued by the Lords' Committee on the 17th. Doctor Reynolds testified that the King's memory "was strong and correct as it ever was, and his perception as acute." He said that the patient was unable to assume his royal functions because "his judgment is perverted and he has lost his discretion at present." When questioned about the effect of the King's advanced age upon his chances for recovery, he replied, "Age seems to have made very few depredations upon his Majesty. He is apparently younger and stronger than many persons much younger than himself; and is therefore much better able to resist the effect of disease, than several persons younger than himself would be." Doctor Reynolds said that there had been no difficulty whatever with the King's eyesight in 1804, when he last attended him. On being asked the effect of blindness on the mental disorder he said, "That is a question I can hardly make up my mind to, I can see it operate sometime for his benefit, because it intercepts some sources of irritation; and there are times when I think the loss of sight will be a grievance, by preventing the amusing him and abstracting him from himself."

Doctor Baillie was next called. He said that the King was younger and stronger at 72 than many men at 62. Speaking as a physician whose skill was founded primarily on his great knowledge of pathology, he observed, "There are no marks of any permanent or organic disease in the brain itself." Doctor Heberden said in his testimony, "I do not consider his Majesty's bodily health to have been the origin of his disorder; but his Majesty's bodily health has been affected along with the disorder and made part of the disorder." When asked what made the King liable to recurrent attacks of mental disorder, he answered, as most physicians would answer today, "It is a peculiarity of constitution, of which I can give no distinct account." Sir Henry Hallford shared the optimism of his medical colleagues as to eventual and complete recovery. He admitted, however, that "not much progress" had been made in the fortnight since their appearance before the Privy Council. When asked why he and Doctor Baillie had permitted the Queen to see the patient on October 29, he answered, "We have always thought it proper to observe our promises to the King religiously." In describing George III's irrationality he used the nice descriptive phrase, "his judgment is in eclipse." He made one of the bases for his favorable prognosis the fact that there was to this attack a clearly assignable cause, Princess Amelia's death.

The final witness was Doctor Robert D. Willis. He stated that in his twenty-two years in the practice of medicine he had never seen a patient of the King's age "labouring under a similar complaint." He admitted that advanced age generally made recovery from a psychosis improbable. He said, on the other hand, that in this particular patient, "there is no mark of age in the symptoms, which usually attend complaints of that description, arising from age; and it appears to me, therefore, that his Majesty is likely to recover, notwithstanding his age." As he was the only specialist in psychiatry among the medical witnesses, he was cross-examined about the various types of insanity and was asked to classify the King's disorder. He said that the disorder was somewhere between insanity and delirium, partaking more of the latter. Recovery, he declared, was most probable "from the species of derangement which partakes most of delirium, provided the patient survives the bodily disease."

During the week of December 14 the reports were consistently favorable. Then there was a sudden and sharp increase in the violence of the symptoms, which lasted until the beginning of the New Year. On

December 25 Miss Knight, who had been Lady-companion to Princess Amelia, wrote in her diary, "Christmas day, a most dreadfully tempestuous night. The King was very ill in the evening—a violent attack and I believe in danger. The Prince and Duke of Cumberland came in the night. All the Princes are here. The King's fever is greatly abated; but he was in serious danger last night; his pulse was 125."

During the first part of 1811 there was distinct improvement in the condition of the royal patient. Except for occasional and very short periods of recurring excitement, progress was steady during January. At the end of the first week, one of the letters which the physicians sent regularly to the Premier, Mr. Perceval, read, "The day has not passed without error and delusion. Yet it appears to be getting less prominent, and His Majesty has either more power of laying it aside from his mind; or at least more power of concealing it—we consider the day as a continuation of the progress we have before noticed; and as likely to lead to something better. He begins to talk more of his own family, and upon the whole is going on well, though not without considerable marks of remaining indisposition." The physicians, led by the dogmatic Doctor Willis, retained their optimism. Lord Bathurst reported in the middle of January. "The opinion of the physicians is more than ever confident of recovery, but still uncertain as to time. Doctor Willis has not the slightest apprehension of another paroxysm now; he thinks that out of all probability, and speaks of it with as much certainty as can be on anything dependent on the state of any complaint. The unanimous opinion also of the physicians is that a state of some irritation must precede recovery, but that recovery is as certain as anything can be." On January 17 the King was permitted to take a walk on Windsor Terrace. According to Miss Knight, the airing was inspired by Willis, and Heberden consented through weakness. Doctors Halford and Baillie knew nothing of it in advance. Doctor Robert Willis, as his father's son, was always under suspicion of being a "political doctor." "It was probably a manœuvre of Willis," Miss Knight explained, "to please the Ministers (and perhaps ordered by them) to make people suppose the King better, and to get more votes on the Regency Bill question, which came on that day."

Doctor Willis was firmly of the opinion that the King should be apprised of political events as they developed. It was better, he thought, to keep him informed from day to day than to risk a relapse after

recovery by confronting him suddenly with the report of business finished during his illness and without his consent.

The political problem of greatest moment was the Regency question. The physicians feared, because of the bad relations between the King and his eldest son, that if the Prince of Wales were made Regent, George III would never recover. They notified the ministers on January 25 that they felt it desirable for them personally to inform the King of the plans for the projected Regency. "They said that His Majesty's understanding and comprehension were perfect to every purpose of such a communication, but they could not undertake that his judgement would be so upon what it might be proper to do upon such things as he would nevertheless thoroughly comprehend." Despite his disordered state, George III retained his kingly pride. He had refused to ask to see his ministers or to have papers of state sent to him, in fear that the physicians might humiliate him by refusing his requests.

On January 26 Mr. Perceval and Lord Eldon were with the King for one hour and twenty minutes. They discussed the state of his family and foreign affairs, but they were unable at this interview to bring up the plans for the Regency. The King "spoke of Princess Amelia with great feeling." Whenever the problems of domestic politics were broached he shifted nimbly to another subject—skipping from one topic to another is a very simple business for a patient in a manic state. Mr. Perceval again talked with the King for more than an hour on the 29th. On this occasion they discussed domestic politics. When the King inquired whether Parliament had been sitting and what they had been doing, "Perceval told him, that the same course nearly had been pursued as that which had been approved of by His Majesty after his illness in 1789, so as to provide for his finding everything as nearly as possible upon his recovery in the same state as before. That the measure had been carried forward in the House of Lords, and a few more days would complete it. The King said he had no doubt everything had been done for the best and with the best intentions. He was ready to sign or do anything that Perceval should recommend. . . . He then dwelt upon his own advanced age of seventy-two. That it was time for him to think of retirement. That he must still, however, be 'King,' he could not part with that name, but *otium cum dignitate* was the most suitable to his age, etc. Upon representation to him of the duties which a religious sense of his situation would still require him to discharge, he listened with some unwillingness, and



said, he should always be at hand to come forward if he was wanted, and, upon the whole was rather impatient of any pressure upon the subject of resigning his power." The bulletins for the forty-eight hours following this interview show that it had no immediate undesirable effect.

The plans for the Regency progressed slowly. The Prince of Wales no longer had a close-knit coterie of influential Opposition leaders. Lord Grenville was the natural head of the disjointed groups that were out of power, but he and the Prince were not very friendly. The Prince had complained to his physician, Sir Walter Farquhar, that after Fox's death the government, which was then under Grenville's leadership, "had left off making any confidential communications to him." The Duke of Cumberland quoted his brother the Prince of Wales as saying that he had no objection to the present Perceval Ministry, but "that he should expect to be treated like a gentleman, not like a ruffian." No doubt the royal brothers hoped that the dissemination of this hint might result in a Regency Bill without the despised restrictions. The Cabinet, however, was not to be dissuaded from its decision to follow as closely as possible the precedents established by Pitt in his momentous struggle in 1788; and the Prince was so informed by them in a letter. He called all his brothers together; they met at Carlton House and dispatched a communication to the Prime Minister, Mr. Perceval, protesting against the measures for a restricted Regency, which they considered "as perfectly unconstitutional as they are contrary to, and subversive of, the principles that seated our family upon the throne of these realms." According to Rose, the offense and disgust which this communication occasioned were beyond anything he had ever remembered.

The Prince found difficulties with the men he wanted to have as leaders of his government. Lord Grey and Lord Grenville agreed to serve in the Regency Cabinet only on condition that the Prince's oldest friends, Lord Moira and Mr. Sheridan, be excluded from office; and further, that the Prince promise not to consult them in the future at any time, even before he should take office. The bill creating the Prince of Wales the Regent, with greatly curtailed powers, until his father's recovery, passed Parliament in its final form on the last day of January, 1811. The ceremony in which the new Privy Councillors were to kiss the hand of the ruler was set for February 6. Meantime the plans for the new government were to be announced. It was considered

a foregone conclusion that Perceval's government was to be replaced. The only uncertainty lay in what posts the various members of the Opposition would fill.

Once again the insanity of King George III was to dominate political developments in England. Sir Henry Halford, who was almost unknown to the Prince before his father's illness, had at the onset made it his business to ingratiate himself with the heir to the throne. He soon found himself in a position of great personal importance and of unique value to the nation. He was trusted by the Queen and the ministers, as well as by the Prince and the Opposition leaders. It was to Doctor Halford that Sir Samuel Romilly referred in the diary of his parliamentary life, when he wrote, "The principal instrument in effecting this change in the Prince's intentions has been one of the King's physicians. He was in the habit of waiting on the Prince from the beginning of the King's illness, and was at that time reported, of representing to the Prince that the King's illness was much more alarming than it appeared in the ostensible reports made to be seen by the public. Of late, however, he has represented to the Prince in the strongest manner, the probability of the King's recovery; has told him that the King frequently makes the most anxious inquiries after him; and has represented to the Prince that a change of ministers would in all probability, as soon as it was communicated to the King, produce such an exacerbation (this is the very term he used) as might put an end to his life; and he has very strongly forced upon the Prince the reflection, that he might be considered as, or that he would in effect be guilty of parricide. The Queen too wrote a letter to him to say that the King had been informed of all that has passed during his illness, and was in the highest degree gratified by the manner in which the Prince had conducted himself while these matters had been pending."

There is no doubt that the Prince of Wales had great difficulty in reaching a conclusion in regard to his Cabinet. It was rumored that he finally sent for Lady Hertford and Mrs. Fitzherbert to make for him this first important decision as ruler of Great Britain. According to his estranged wife Princess Caroline, "the Prince has, during the agitation of these things had three epileptic fits." His physician, Sir Walter Farquhar, also attested to his seriously upset condition at the time. A profound neurotic, he feared the guilt he would experience if his father's death, for which he had hoped so long, could in any manner be ascribed to him.

One portion of the Regency Bill dealt with the care of the King's person during his incompetency. This was placed under the direction of Queen Charlotte, who was assisted by the Queen's Council.\* One gathers, from a letter by Princess Elizabeth to Lady Harcourt, that the council's assistance must have been more theoretical than practical. As she phrased it, "The first Question the Council put to Sir Henry Hallford and Doctor Willis was, 'Do you think that by throwing buckets of water upon your patient's head he would be cured?'"

The Queen's sphere of control was more circumscribed than was planned in 1788. In 1810 it was limited to "the sole direction of such portion of his Majesty's household as should be deemed requisite and suitable for the due attendance of his Majesty's sacred person and the maintenance of his Royal dignity." She was allowed £10,000 annually as payment for her services, which on her death was granted to the Duke of York, who succeeded her.

\*Its members were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Lord Chancellor, the Duke of Montrose, Lords Ellenborough, Winchelsea, and Aylesford, and Sir William Grant. It was the duty of the council to examine the physicians and other attendants of the King. In the beginning, some members of the council went to Windsor at least twice a week to see that the care of the royal patient was properly administered.

## CHAPTER XXVIII



*"But we have turned the key upon the King."*

THE DUKE OF CLARENCE

THE REGENCY, WHICH BEGAN ON February 6, 1811, was expected to be short-lived because of the great improvement in the mental condition of George III during the preceding month. His scatterbrained and disloyal third son, William, Duke of Clarence, was one of the few who believed that it marked the final retirement of the King. An associate of William's related that ". . . the day after the Regency was fixed, the Duke of Clarence dined at Sir Thomas Sutton's and talked worse than ever. After abusing Perceval, etc.; violently for their restrictions, he said, 'But we have turned the key upon the King. He'll come back no more. That I promise you.'"

Although George III had always resisted the idea of a Regency, he now accepted it with surprising resignation. On January 31, when Mr. Perceval and Lord Liverpool spoke to him about the completed plans for the Regency and told him that they would soon be out of office because of it, he said that when he regained the Crown ". . . he would bring his present servants back, but desired to have time, requesting that he might not be brought forward too soon." On February 5 he said to Lord Eldon, "I don't think it a very pleasant thing to be put out of office, any more than any of you may do. But my ministers tell me that my physicians think it best that the weight of business should be taken off my hands; and my physicians tell me that my ministers think so; and, as I have a perfect confidence in you all that you will do what is best for me, I shall very readily acquiesce."\*

\*The Chancellor had gone to Windsor on that day to satisfy himself fully "that he was not well enough to make it unfit for his Lordship to put the great seal to the commission for giving royal assent to the Regency Bill; and found the King so well (though not recovered) as somewhat to embarrass the noble Lord. He however returned, and sealed the commission after which the bill received the royal assent."

The public medical bulletins of February 7 and 8 were the first to speak of the King's "progress toward recovery." On the 8th the Queen visited her husband for the first time in three months. She immediately dispatched a jubilant account of her visit to the Prince Regent. "You will be glad to hear, my dearest son," she wrote, "that I this instant returned from the dear King. He received me very kindly and talked much of his family with great affection. He looks better than I have seen Him after any one of His other illnesses and seems not to be fallen away, as I expected. I stayed about half an hour with Augusta below stairs, and I am quite sure that those short visits are a Comfort to him."

Sir Henry Hallford admitted, many years later, that in February, 1811, there developed a serious disagreement between several members of the Council and certain of the King's physicians. Many of the Council believed that George III had recovered full possession of his faculties and that his restoration to the throne was imminent.

"On one particular day they came out saying that he has spoken so collectedly—1st on the necessity of sending troops to America, of the persons to command, of the points to which troops were to be sent; 2ndly, of the expediency of the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor, of the persons best fitted for the office, etc., etc.—that they believed him quite restored and able to resume his power. Lord Ellenborough used the words of Pilate: 'I find no fault at all in that just person.'" It is only natural that, to individuals unversed in the behavior of psychotics, George III appeared to be a normal person. But the expression of intelligent ideas is not proof of sanity. Many insane individuals are actually brilliant. It is rather the total absence of pathologically abnormal ideas that distinguishes the healthy from the morbid mind. The group of Councillors favoring immediate restoration was supported by the expressed conviction of one of the physicians that the continuance of the Regency would "... disturb his mind and increase his excitement."

Those physicians who advocated continuing the Regency stressed the fact that the patient was himself fearful of returning too soon to power. They admitted that this was in striking contrast to his restlessness to resume his full functions in 1789. They recalled that before the 1810 illness had really begun, and when his judgment was still unaffected, he had said to his two physicians, Doctors Baillie and Halford, "I have a great reliance on you both not only as skillful physicians, but

as men of sense and integrity. I feel that I am going to be ill in the former way, and I request of you two, that you will not be induced, on any account, to represent me as recovered, till you are satisfied that I am perfectly so. By permitting me to go abroad on the last occasion, before that was the case, the physicians were the cause of my doing a great many absurd and foolish things."

Several of the doctors insisted that the King was still mentally disordered. They maintained that though he was able to conceal his mental abnormalities in the presence of the ministers or the physicians, his disorder was still manifest at other times. In order to prove their point, they had the blind monarch surreptitiously observed by a medical attendant. The King soon ". . . took a glass of wine and water and drank it to the health 'conjugis meae dilectissimae Elizabethae.'" The occasional repetition of such abnormal activity finally convinced all the physicians and nearly all the ministers of the necessity of continuing the status quo for a considerable period.

During March, 1811, the official health bulletins were issued at St. James's three times a week and in April only twice a week. Progress was so favorable that toward the end of the month it was decided to publish bulletins only once a week. But there is abundant evidence that George III was still far from well. On March 4 Lord Auckland wrote to Lord Grenville ". . . though the King's mind is calm and collected during a greater part of the day, he is still liable in every conversation to wander into particular subjects without end or possibility of restraint; such as projects for a new regulation of the ribbons and Garter; fanciful improvements of Kensington Garden, etc."

"The Progress of the Symptoms of the King's illness" contains many entries indicating the persistence of the psychosis during March, 1811:

*March 2.* The delusions abated, but being alone with a Page, a former confidant, he talked of his attachment. [Lady Pembroke.]

*March 8.* Much engaged in adjusting the bed clothes.

*March 12.* This morning in too high spirits.

*March 16.* The delusion about Hanover has returned and shares his mind with the object of his attachment. There is also a tendency to grossness, both respecting a Housemaid and the Queen.

*March 17.* On going to bed talked to His Attendants of a new Female Order, the Principle object of which was the object of His affections.

*March 20.* Full of plans, occasionally irritated against his physicians for not declaring him well.

*March 21.* There is a nervousness and anxiety to be declared well; and a

distrust of the Physicians. Slept 4 hours. Occupied when awake in adjusting bedclothes, by rolling them down and up again.

*March 23.* It appeared that the inferior attendants had been bribed by the King and were therefore dismissed.

*March 30.* The delusions on going to bed implied an expectation of being with the object of his wishes. It appears that when with the Pages He acts according to his feelings; when with the Physicians, is in restraint and conceals them.

*March 31.* In the presence of Sir Henry Halford said he had sworn five times on the bible to be faithful to his dear Eliza who had been faithful to him for fifty-five years. Sir Henry also heard that he had drunk the health of "Sanctissima mea uxor Elizabetha," and formed the idea of becoming a Lutheran, which was necessary to the lefthand marriage, and which connected itself with the whole scheme of Hanover.

In April, the sixth month of the illness, George III's condition was much like that which persisted for several months following the 1804 attack. In consequence, the optimism of his physicians in regard to a complete recovery was still unshaken. The King was able to appear twice daily upon the Terrace, and received frequent visits from the members of his family.

May began in much the same manner. It ended quite disastrously. The turn came on the 20th, just after the physicians permitted George to go horseback riding again, though it is uncertain that the renewed activity caused the relapse. A letter from the Duke of York to the Lord Chancellor on May 25 gives a clear picture of the state of affairs. "At the desire of my brother the Prince Regent," he wrote, "I trouble your Lordship with this letter, to acquaint you with what has passed during these last two days at Windsor, from whence I am only returned this afternoon. Upon my arrival there yesterday morning, I found His Majesty in the Queen's room. He appeared at first very much affected at seeing me, and expressed himself in the kindest and most affectionate manner upon my reappointment to the chief command of the Army; but soon flew from that subject and ran on, in perfect good humour, but with the greatest rapidity, and with little or no connection, upon the most trifling topics, at times hinting at some of the subjects of his delusion, in spite of all of our endeavours to change the conversation. . . . This continued the same during his ride and the whole of the Queen's visit in the afternoon; and though this morning his Majesty was quieter and less rapid in the change of his ideas, yet the topics of his conversation were equally frivolous.

"I was so much shocked at what I had observed both on Wednesday and during the different visits of yesterday, that I took an opportunity, when I left his Majesty yesterday evening, to have a conversation with Dr. Robert Willis, who very candidly stated to me his opinion, that his Majesty had lost ground this week, and that though he thought very seriously of the state of his bodily health, he was much more alarmed at the apparent frivolity or rather imbecility of his mind. He added that something ought to be done; but that, in the present state of his Majesty's mind, it was in vain to hope that any conversation with him would be attended with any good effect."

The unfavorable condition of bodily health to which the letter referred was a return of the œdematous swelling of the legs. This seems to have been present only at periods in which there was an increase in the patient's restless activity and was apparently a symptom of strain on his functionally limited heart muscle.

On May 29 the King had again to be placed in restraint. The physicians conferred in an effort to find some change which might prove advantageous. For some time removal from Windsor to Kew, such as had been made in 1788, had been contemplated. But when this was suggested to the insane patient, he said, wisely enough, that since finding his way about was essential to his comfort, nothing but force could move him; for he was not familiar enough with any other place to be able to go around in his blindness unassisted. The Queen's Council, after a long consultation with the physicians on May 30, decided to exclude even the family from visiting.

By this time the medical staff had become deeply concerned over the seriousness of the exacerbation. At Doctor Willis' request, they gladly granted him full responsibility for the conduct of the case. "Everything," wrote Thomas Grenville on June 4, "is now entrusted to the sole direction of Willis, who introduces or refuses to introduce the other doctors just as he thinks fit." The Queen wrote optimistically of the new regime to George, now Prince Regent. "I saw this morning Doctors Baillie, Willis and Dundas," she said, "every one of them are unanimous that the present System will prove beneficial in the end but that it must take time before we can see essential good coming from it. . . . The momentary object is obtained (more calmness) by the absence of Domestic Servants which will in time lead to Further Improvement but of that little can be expected for a fortnight to come." Thomas Grenville wrote during June that the King was then in the



same condition as he had been in February and that he was dwelling on the same delusions. He said that horseback riding had been discontinued, ". . . not on account of swelling in the thighs, as was reported, but because the King's conversation was not fit to be heard by the groom who leads his horse. The swelling of the legs has latterly increased; the medical men are not without anxiety on this symptom; but profess no great apprehension from it if it does not spread higher."

A deep pessimism began to invade the Court. The Marquis of Buckingham declared at the end of the month, "The most professed courtiers affect to give up all prospects of recovery." The only favorable sign during the month of June was that the King found enjoyment, for the first time since his illness began, in having books and journals read aloud to him. On June 12 he listened for several hours to an old history of Windsor, and Beck's *Dormant Baronage of England*. On the 27th he had the newspaper and Boswell's *Johnson* read to him. On July 6 the Queen's Council met to issue their quarterly certificate respecting the King's health. The physicians and attendants were examined under oath. The council concluded that the King was unable to resume the personal exercise of his royal functions though his bodily health ". . . was but little disordered." They stated that his mental health was no worse than in April but ". . . that some of His Majesty's physicians did not entertain hopes of His Majesty's recovery quite so confident as those which they had expressed then."

During the second week in July there was a sharp increase in the severity of the symptoms. By the middle of the month the patient was felt to be in a precarious condition and the issuing of daily bulletins was again begun. "The King had been dangerously ill all today," wrote Miss Knight on the 15th, "and has taken no nourishment—his mind more distracted than ever, and his fever very high. Willis was up with him all night, and Sir Henry Halford stays." At this period, the King insisted on being dressed in white most of the time, and talked a great deal about purity. He believed that he and his chosen companions were all seventeen years old—a delusion which probably arose from the fact that he and "Eliza" Pembroke were seventeen when they became friends.

Princess Elizabeth's letter to Lady Harcourt shows the despair into which the King's condition plunged the loyal members of the royal family at this time: "The Doctors think there is no amendment which is wretchedness to us, tho' they are right in telling the truth. The day,

however, has been quieter. . . . But the mind is a blank to surrounding objects; the only nourishment, jellies; all other eatables refused. We none of us dare think or look forward, for everything is so black; we do what we can to support ourselves; but believe I see everything as I ought to see it, in fear and trembling, yet thoroughly trusting in God."

Excerpts from the physicians' clinical notes give a tragic picture of the blind monarch during July and August, 1811:

*July 6.* Provoked to anger with slight causes. Gross and indecent allusions.

11. At dinner declared the operation upon His eye should not be performed without Eliza's command.

16. Throughout the day constantly talking or imitating the sounds of instruments.

18. Required restraint. Fits of violence. Pulse 88.

19. In morning took pill of opium. Pulse 94.

20. Pulse 76. In general confused and lost, no three sentences connected with each other.

25. He drank milk and water. Eliza the toast, and indulged in talking of her for half an hour.

26. Is under the impression of his being attended by persons not now in existence; only at the moment distinguishes the voices of Physicians but immediately relapses into confusion and error. Pulse 88. Refuses food, seems that some notion respecting Eliza is the cause of his refusal.

30. His conversation this morning disposed of Offices of State to persons long dead.

31. Being offered medicine; restraint was necessary for some time. He was so violent. Thinner, countenance without expression.

*August 1.* Full of power he professes to raise the dead and assimilate different ages. All his favorites are to remain seventeen. It being necessary to take Physic, restraint was required to get it down.

2. Wildness and languor in his look. Pulse 94.

4. Slept 7 hours without opium, remains irascible and when they wanted to feel his pulse, was so violent, that all the Physicians left the room.

5. Was under restraint, either furious or sullen while up.

14. Said he had a long agreeable conversation with Prince Octavius.

18. Before the physicians in high spirits. Pulse 64. Sung several songs. Played on flute and harpsichord.

19. 60 drops of Laudanum, 1 grain Tartar Emetic and some salts were given. Made him less violent but produced no sleep.

22. Violent probably from the irritation of the blisters which had been applied.

26. Proposed sinking a part of England, marrying living persons, with those dead, and Eliza much dwelt on. This morning inquired about Royal Family for the first time in a long while.

In his diary Abbot described a meeting with Mr. Perceval after church on July 21: "He seemed to have no apprehension of any immediate danger to the King's life, but the ravings were very wild; sometimes the King talked as if he were conversing amongst the dead with persons long since gone; such as Perceval's father, or at another time, some old Hanoverian Minister; sometimes also conceiving himself to be shut up in Noah's ark as an antediluvian; this latter idea very remarkably prevailed in his mind during one of his former illnesses many years ago." The recurrent nature of many of the King's delusions marks a point of unusual psychological interest. He held the same false beliefs which he had entertained a quarter of a century earlier during the 1788 illness. During both periods he believed himself a member of the Lutheran Church, divorced from his Queen and married to Lady Pembroke. At both times he thought that his beloved child, Octavius, had come to life again and that there was a great flood inundating portions of England. This confirms the theory that the stuff out of which psychiatric delusions are made does not come generally from momentary environmental stimuli but wells up out of deeper layers of the personality.

On August 1, the Queen's Council proposed unexpectedly that psychiatric consultants including Doctor John Willis be called in. The royal family was gravely concerned. "I have just seen the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duke of Montrose and Lord Winchelsea," the Queen wrote to the Regent. "They came with a proposal of making Doctor R. Willis consult with His Brother John upon the Dear King's present situation, but not with the idea of seeing Him unless it was absolutely necessary; knowing the King's dislike to the Man and the promise the King extracted from me of never letting him come into his Presence or again into the House, I felt a great reluctance upon the subject, but upon their stating that the length of the Complaint and the little progress produced by the different Tryals which have been attempted not succeeding they felt it their duty to make this proposal. Immediately answered, that I was desirous that not even an interview should take place without even the whole Family being first apprised of it." After a family conference, the Queen informed the Council,

"... that she and all the family had taken a solemn oath by which they promised the King that they never would admit J. Willis to attend him again, and that from the information given in 1804, during his Majesty's last illness, the Privy Council had declared that the King's objections were not without a foundation, in consequence of which the then Ministers (Lord Sidmouth's Administration) had sent Simmons, a new person. Her Majesty, however, to prove that she had no personal prejudice against J. Willis, and did not wish to exclude any advice which might be supposed beneficial to the King, consented that a consultation might be held, at which Doctor J. Willis, with the addition of Doctors Simmons and Munro, might be present."

A consultation of the regular medical staff with these three psychiatrists was held on the night of August 4. Doctor Munro was the son of Doctor John Munro, who had seen the King early in the 1788 attack and was the last of three successive generations of Munros to serve as medical directors of Bedlam. Doctor Simmons came through Windsor on his way to the meeting at Sir Henry's on August 4, but was not permitted to see the patient, since Doctor John Willis and Doctor Munro had not had the same opportunity. At the conference the consultants "... only recommended acting as circumstance might require, and suggested nothing new."

The Queen's Council presented a petition, signed by all members but the Archbishop of York and Lord Winchelsea, that Doctor Simmons be placed in active charge of the case. Winchelsea wanted Doctor John Willis. There were further family debates. Finally, on October 9 an order was issued from Lambeth Palace that Doctors Munro, Simmons, and Willis "... should conjointly have access at stated periods to the King's apartment in order that they may be enabled by their personal observations of His Majesty's habits, demeanour, and condition both of Body and Mind, to form an accurate judgment of the extent and nature of the disorder."

The Queen consented on condition that the consultants should not sign the bulletins nor make their presence known to the patient. Two weeks later she wrote a long letter to the Council vehemently protesting against Doctor Simmons' desire to be alone with the King. She felt certain that he was scheming "... to introduce Himself into the exclusive Management" of the patient. She said that the King's objection to Doctor John Willis was merely "... the Prejudice generally imbibed by the King towards individuals similarly circumstanced in

regard to His Majesty," while his prejudice against Doctor Simmons was personal as well, and was shared by her and the other members of her family. She said further that she did not see how he could presume exclusive merit, "as it stands on Record that the King had recovered from two previous illnesses under the management of other Physicians."

Doctor John Willis joined the regular staff of medical attendants in November. The Queen wrote the Prince Regent that, because of her fear that the King would never forgive her for permitting Doctor Willis to attend him should he ever recover, she had sent the Council an account of her part in the matter. "My conscience is Clear," she wrote, "for I have kept off the attendance of Doctor John Willis a year and the plague of the Consulting Physicians near two months by a constant opposition."

In her letter to the Council she wrote that she hoped, by her yielding to their pressure in regard to Doctor John Willis's regular attendance, that consultations by Doctors Munro and Simmons would no longer be necessary. The Council acquiesced for the time being but frankly told her Majesty that they could see no grounds for her attitude toward Doctor Simmons and requested her not to ask them to exclude any one in the future. The Queen's Council, composed for the most part of men of importance and great attainments in their own fields, could not restrain themselves from trespassing on alien territory. As Miss Knight expressed it, they "acted despotically," even ordering the physicians to resume the administration of quinine.

By the time Doctor John Willis entered the case, every one but Doctor Heberden despaired of the King's recovery. Even the faithful members of the royal household had resigned themselves to a feeling of hopelessness. On October 11 the Princess Elizabeth wrote to Lady Harcourt, "The doctors think very, very ill of the case, and give it a term which is a dagger to our heart; yet we ought to be grateful that everything has been done that could, and that he does not Suffer. They say arguing is folly, he must be given by stealth, for it would be running hazard to force it. The going to bed is dreadful; the day otherwise is quiet, always thinking the room full, and amused the whole day; they all say that such a case was never seen or Known before, for it is not the common kind of complaint; don't think me a fool, I cannot say the word, it is horror to me."

In the century that has passed since George III's final illness,

prognosis in psychiatry has not progressed far beyond the point to which this group of experts had carried it. Had the specialists of today been called upon to predict the course of the King's illness at its onset, they would probably have fallen into the same errors. We know that attacks of manic-depressive insanity have a good outlook for recovery except in the aged. But where the dividing line begins is still very uncertain. On the basis of his complete recovery only six years before, it was not foolhardy for George III's physicians to give a favorable prognosis even at the age of seventy-two. An ominous progression in the clinical picture was the patient's diminishing contact with reality, a tendency which his complete blindness exaggerated. He might possibly have recovered in 1811 had he had useful vision.\*

When Doctor John Willis began his regular attendance he made himself known to the King, but poor George was so disordered that the revelation seemed to have no appreciable effect on him. The physicians agreed to give Willis a three months' trial during which he was to be the only doctor to converse with the patient. According to excerpts from the physicians' notes, made during September and the three final months of the year 1811, no significant change in the clinical behavior of the patient was observable as a result of this decision:

*September 9.* This morning too violent to receive the physicians.

10. Shed tears of joy during interview of the physicians at an expectation he had of seeing Prince Octavius at Kew today, although two minutes before He correctly stated a conversation with the American Minister at the conclusion of the last war.

12. Spoke of George I, Prince Octavius and others all dead, as engaged in his affairs.

13. The late King was alive and had commanded him to take the name of George Augustus, Prince of Wales, Prince Octavius was alive, and married to a daughter of the Duke of Montrose. He had signed death warrants for six of His Sons.

17. In the afternoon restraint required on account of Exposing his Person.

19. Detailed the effect of an Act of Parliament just passed, and read in all the Churches for the Dissolution of all Marriages before the first of August. Also his power of bringing people to life and making them young again.

23. For the last six nights a new symptom has been noticed in the most

\*A very important factor, which cannot be measured quantitatively, was the increase in the sclerosis of the arteries of the brain which had taken place in the six-year interval. Possibly some of his hallucinations were partially dependent upon the drugs which the physicians administered.

offensive degree, with design fouling the bed. A full dose of Tartar Emetic repressed the violence.

*October 1.* Required restraint to prevent taking off his clothes.

5. In a kind of delirium, pulse quick, eyes in constant motion.

8. Slept ten minutes.

21. In evening on hearing any foot on the floor, stamped with both his feet by Order of God Almighty.

27. At six in the evening threw off wig and neck cloth; when replaced, threatened if not allowed to bed he would befoul himself, and did so, and required restraint; then wetted himself and was put to bed. Slept three hours, then required restraint. This morning irrational.

28. Proposing to escape to Denmark from an inundation over the country.

31. Said one of the Princes had been executed and he had only one son left.

*November 2.* No sleep, in restraint all night.

10. Gave Princess Amelia a minute account of her own funeral. Told Doctor Baillie he was in the Queen's Lodge.

16. Tears and laughter succeed one another.

18. Gave a concert to His Ladies, many long dead.

24. At the name of Doctor John Willis got into a passion.

*December 1.* Longer ceremony before dinner mixed with a Hunting Song, and threw down the table without eating.

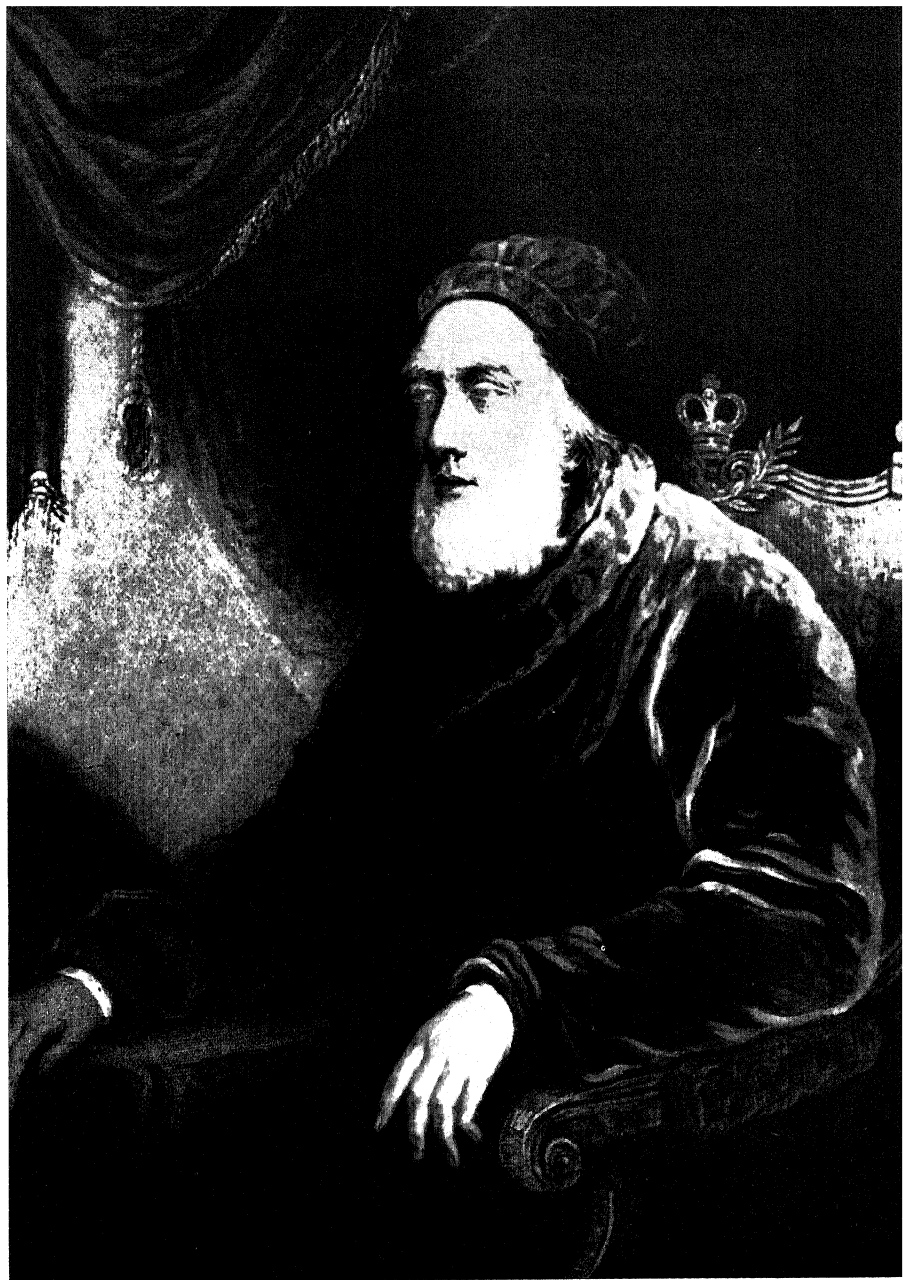
2. Liberal in a power he possesses of sending people to lower world.

12. This morning in a violent burst of passion against Sir Henry Halford for not allowing that the Prince Regent had thrown overboard one of his sisters, and drowned his brother in a passage to France.

29. Talked all day German and English.

The year 1812 opened in much the same manner. In the middle of January there was a short period of increased severity. According to Abbot's diary, ". . . the King was so violently agitated, and in such a tremor today that his life was in great danger; and it was not impossible that any hour might put an end to his life. He would take no sustenance. Willis had attempted to give him milk and water, but had been unable to approach him or persuade him." The King was convinced that they wanted to poison him.

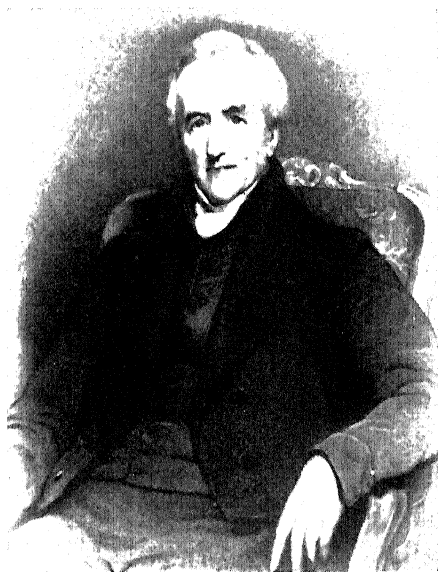
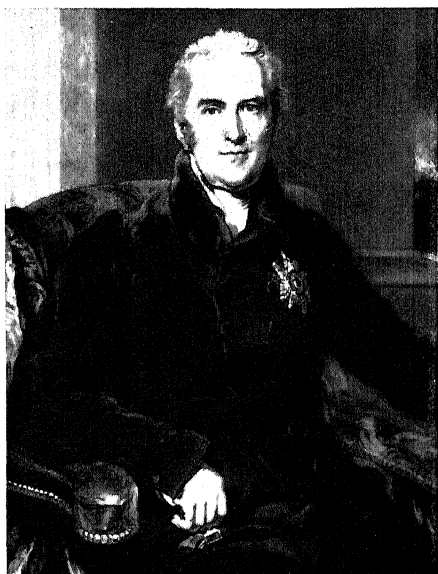
Much of the time the aged monarch was occupied in an ideally happy dream-world, conversing with his two little sons Octavius and Alfred, who had died in childhood, or in giving performances for admiring ladies he believed present. He held long imaginary conversations with them and at times would grow very angry. On one occasion he berated one of the ladies for not knowing the laws of



CHARLES TURNER'S ENGRAVING OF GEORGE III AS HE WAS  
IN HIS FINAL ILLNESS

This so clearly depicted the blindness and the deteriorated expression of  
the insane old King that it was suppressed by his son, George IV





THE PHYSICIANS IN THE KING'S FINAL ILLNESS

*Upper left:* Doctor John Willis (1751-1835)

*Upper right:* Doctor Matthew Baillie (1761-1823)

*Lower left:* Sir Henry Hallford (1766-1844)

*Lower right:* Doctor William Heberden, the younger (1767-1845)

succession in England and Hanover. The physicians noted in their record in August, "His conversation in extravagance is like the detail of a Dream." As time went on his contact with reality was becoming more tenuous. Day by day he drifted further into his world of shadows.

And meanwhile his faithful former secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, now serving Queen Charlotte in the same capacity, was checking up on the enormous expense of the King's medical care. Late in the summer of 1812, Sir Herbert sent an itemized account of the annual expenditures to the Earl of Liverpool,\* the First Lord of the Treasury. Sir Herbert itemized the annual medical expenditures as follows:

|                                                                                     | Per.<br>G.  | Annum.<br>S. |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Attendance of 3 ordinary Physicians at 30G. per diem                                | 9828        |              |
| Mr. Dundas at 15G. per diem                                                         | 1501        | 10           |
| Doctor Robert Willis at 30G. per diem—365 days                                      | 11497       | 10           |
| Dr. John Willis at 30G. per diem—8 mos.                                             | 7056        |              |
| Post horses for Regular Physicians three times a week,<br>back and forth            | 1716        |              |
| Post horses for Willis' and Dundas                                                  | 500         |              |
| Doctor Willis' Attendants                                                           | 600         |              |
| Extra Attendance of Physicians and Mr. Dundas on Coun-<br>cil days—say 12 per annum | <u>1300</u> |              |
|                                                                                     | 33990       | Guineas      |

Grieved as the Queen was over her husband's tragic situation, her thrifty soul rebelled against the heavy charges.

As Sir Herbert pointed out, there seemed little purpose in having both the Doctors Willis attend at the same time. He suggested that a flat fee might be set for them since the Willises did not have such large private practices as the regular physicians and since they were, in addition, receiving pensions for their former services. ". . . But," said Sir Herbert, "there is so much jealousy between these gentlemen and so much Etiquette as to Remuneration that I much doubt whether they would subscribe to such an arrangement."

\*Liverpool had succeeded Perceval in June, after Perceval was shot down on the floor of the House by a paranoid assassin.

## CHAPTER XXIX



*"There is one less poor, mad King in the world."*

PRINCESS LIEVEN

FROM THE END OF 1812 to the end of 1819 there were no milestones in the life of the blind and insane old King. Dates seem an incongruity, a kind of stupid mockery from the strident world. George III had finally left that life which had given him so much pain for a realm of living eternity, a veritable fairyland peopled with the images of his dreams. It was an existence in which there were no decisions and no responsibilities. He was immortal, he was no longer vulnerable to the spears of Junius and the dagger thrusts of Wilkes. He had no longer to listen to the interminable speeches of a haughty Grenville; he hearkened to angel choirs instead. In his world the Prince of Wales and his third son William were dead, and the deceased Octavius and Amelia were again alive. No one grew ugly or decrepit. He had found the miracle of eternal youth.

During her last years, Queen Charlotte made frequent pilgrimages to George III's wing of the castle. She would busy herself with unimportant details, much in the manner that a faithful widow plucks dead ivy from her husband's grave. These offerings may have afforded her some consolation; but the King, in his separate world, remained untouched by them. When she died in November, 1818, he never even knew it. The precaution of covering the frosted cobblestones of Windsor Castle Yard with straw, to muffle the sounds of the funeral carriages, was a needless gesture. He was quite incapable of grasping the meaning of such realities. There was no indication that he even missed her visits. He is said to have been totally deaf after 1817, but there is no conclusive evidence that this was true. Probably his complete psychological inaccessibility to those around him was misinterpreted as deafness.

Few people visited the aged monarch. He was almost forgotten by the inhabitants of the workaday world. Two letters from the Princess

Elizabeth described her father's condition during this timeless passage of years. "Tho' we say little," she wrote, "my Father keeps our hearts and minds in a fever. True, he is well in bodily health, but that once perfect mind is just in the same unwell state; not unhappy, thank God, but very wrong. . . . Doctor Robert Willis assures me He is perfectly happy in himself, most likely never so happy, for he has no cares, enjoys his music, his company, the army, etc." And again, "If anything can make us more easy under the calamity which it has pleased heaven to inflict on us, it is the apparent happiness that my revered father seems to feel. He considers himself no longer an inhabitant of this world; and often when he has played one of his favorite tunes, observes that he was very fond of it when he was in the world."

A few cryptic clinical notes were made periodically by the physicians:

*January 3, 1813.* Reviewing troops.

*February 4.* The subjects of conversation with his friends gay and cheerful but trivial.

*June 9.* Became nervous, laughing and shedding tears. Chattering his teeth.

*July 8.* Full of schemes of building, journeys, and giving appointments.

*November 15.* Looks in perfect health.

*April 28, 1814.* Occupied in various schemes and arrangements, cheerful, silent, good-humoured, but has hardly time to dress and eat his meals.

*May 26.* Making arrangements for an embarkation all night long.

*July 7.* Amused by recording to ideal Visitors Anecdotes of his life.

*January 7, 1815.* Reviews, Concerts, and new Arrangements occupy and amuse.

*February 16.* No hour passes without proofs of mental derangement, but quiet.

*April 14.* Impatient of help necessary to direct his steps in walking from room to room. His anger momentary; His good humor remarkable.

*June 1.* Though he had dined, apprehended he had not, became irritable.

*June 29.* His malady furnishing such scenes of amusement as delighted Him when well.

*September 1.* Talks incessantly but without excitement.

*June, 1816.* The mind in a satisfied state of mental delusion.

*February, 1817.* What sleep lost at night made up in day.

*December.* A continuance of the same state of self-satisfaction, delusion and good bodily health.

*January, 1819.* On the 22nd, by direction of the Council, immediately after the King's dinner, Sir Henry Halford addressed His Majesty by asking respectfully how he did, and mentioning his own name. The King appeared to collect himself, lifted up his eyes and hands and immediately began

striking rapidly on the Keys of the Harpsichord but made no reply. In some minutes a second attempt was made, which was treated in the same manner; but the keys of the instrument were struck with greater violence.

During the first years of his isolation, George III had insisted on carrying out much of the ritual of his earlier life. At dinner he wore dress clothes, decorated with the brilliant jewelled Star of the Order of the Bath. He often fancied himself host and went through his duties in an elaborate fashion. As the years went on and he grew increasingly less conscious of the world in which he had lived so vigorously, he became accustomed to wearing a loose-fitting tunic. He refused to permit his hair or beard to be cut, and at length his snow-white beard came nearly to his waist. He spent much of his time in a rectangular room lined on both sides with harpsichords. He groped his way along, stopping here and there, playing snatches of music learned many years before—most of them from Handel. His two favorite passages were Delilah's mad love song from "Samson," and the lamentation of Jephthah at the loss of his daughter. Occasionally he took up his flute; and the blind, mad, white-bearded King of Great Britain piped happily for the denizens of his imaginary world. His playing was a prelude to the end that was swiftly approaching.

Until late in 1819 his physical health remained remarkably good. Then suddenly his vigorous old body seemed to give way.\* The disintegration proceeded swiftly, and this time there was to be no remission, no recovery. Still the King fought against the inevitable end. It was not until two days before his death that he took to his bed. Among the Baillie Letters, there is a description of George III's last hours. "On Friday afternoon, the 28th of January, 1820, upon going to enter as usual upon his regular attendance at Windsor, Doctor Baillie found that His Majesty's death was fast approaching. He had become gradually weaker and thinner during several months before, and for the last fortnight the decay had been so rapid that the medical attendants were well prepared for this event.

"From six o'clock the next morning (Saturday) Doctor Baillie remained by the King's bedside until His Majesty expired, which was 35 min. after 8 o'clock that evening. His Majesty did not suffer any pain, and died at last without a struggle but for many hours he was oppressed with difficulty in breathing and great restlessness.

\*He had intermittent hematuria, and it was found that he had an inguinal hernia. Painful hemorrhoids and bed sores developed—then there developed a terminal diarrhœa.

"Thus ended an attendance which had been continued for more than ten years. It is *not* true that previous to the last awful change any return of reason visited his Majesty."

The funeral took place on February 16. London was blanketed by a cold, dense fog. The pomp and ceremony of which the dead monarch had been so extravagantly fond were carried out with meticulous care. The funeral obsequies ended in the darkness of the night, when the procession, under the light of flickering torches and accompanied by tolling bells and muffled drums, made its way from Windsor Castle to St. George's Chapel. It bore the earthly remains of King George III. His spirit had fled the world many years before.

When a King dies, the pulse beat of his nation pauses. But the death of George III, King of Great Britain for sixty years, caused but little stir in the hearts of his people. He had not been the ruler for a decade—he had become an anachronism. There were, of course, a few souls who, for one reason or another, were affected by his passing. His neurotic son and successor George IV suffered a panic of guilt. One of his contemporaries records that he was so ill that "if they had delayed bleeding him for half an hour, it might have killed him." All through the night of the death the new King kept repeating the Lord's Prayer. One hundred and ten times he intoned the immortal chant, impelled by the weakling's need for strength, the sinner's need for absolution. Terrified, he summoned the Archbishop of Canterbury at five in the morning and begged him to pray with him. All through his manhood he had longed to be King; now he was King indeed.

Much that George III had done and stood for had been swept away while he lived his shadow-life during the nine-year Regency. His worthy courtiers had been supplanted by a gay and dissolute group, among whom was Prince Metternich's brilliant mistress, the Countess Lieven. On the morning of January 30, the Countess was awakened by the blaring horns of the news-hawks. Rushing to her window she heard them shouting that the King was dead.\* She picked up a pen to start a note to her lover. "I enjoy the excitement of what is happening now," she wrote, "for after all, it only means that there is one less poor, mad King in the world."

\*The newsmen had pinned on their hats in large letters, "Death of the King." Lest they should be guilty of treason, in case the report were false, they had written "of Abyssinia" in small letters under the caption.



## APPENDIX



### PAGE 52

It had been obvious from the beginning of the reign that Bute was to be advanced to the leadership of the government as soon as it was thought to be practicable. Dodington, who maintained his friendship with the Princess Augusta, wrote to Bute at the end of 1760, "in relation to the measures to be taken to recover the Monarchy from the inveterate usurpation of oligarchy . . . lines which must not be seen by anybody, unless his lordship has a mind to make the King or the Princess laugh":

"Quoth Newcastle to Pitt, 'Tis in vain to dispute;  
If we'd quarrel in private, we must make room for Bute.'  
Quoth Pitt to his Grace, 'To bring that about,  
I fear, my dear Lord, you or I must turn out.'  
'Not at all,' quoth the Duke, 'I meant no such thing.  
'To make room for us all we must turn out the King.'  
'If that's all you scheme,' quoth the Earl, 'by my troth,  
I shall stick to my master, and turn ye out both.'"

The final acceptance of Bute as Premier seems to have been forced by Augusta while the King was still wavering. Forty years later he confided to Rose, during a period of convalescence from an attack of manic excitement, when he still was rather indiscreet in his revelations, that he had long repented of having acquiesced in Bute's promotion.

### PAGE 57

During the close of 1762 and the beginning of 1763 the scurrility dealing with Lord Bute greatly increased. At a meeting of the House of Commons in January, 1763, a Mr. Calvert, the Member for Tewksbury, made a guarded speech in which he employed a parable: There were two old people named Steady who had a young son. Mrs. Steady was guilty of improper relations with the Scotch gardener. Every true member of the Steady family hoped that the son would get quickly rid of the gardener. It was obvious to every one that Mr. Calvert was referring to the intimacy existing between the Princess Dowager Augusta and the Earl of Bute. Gardening was one of that Scottish Lord's chief interests, and it was known that to him Kew owed much of its floral grandeur.

The other most frequently employed poisonous shaft against Bute, the appeal to anti-Scottish prejudice, was found in broadsides and newspapers. One lampoonist wrote:

"Our manner now we all will change-a  
Talk Erse and get the Scottish mange-a  
A tartar each child shall wier-a,  
With bonnets blue we'll deck our hair-a."



"Then strut with Caledonian pride,  
 Shakespeare and Milton fling aside,  
 On bagpipes play, and learn to sing all,  
 Th' achievements of the mighty Fingal."

This epigram on Bute's being given the blue riband of the Order of the Garter, in 1762, is typical of the general attitude:

"Oh! Bute, if instead of contempt and odium,  
 You wish to obtain a whole nation's eulogium,  
 From your neck to your gullet transfer the blue string  
 And our hearts are all yours from the very first swing."

In 1763, a book entitled *The Butiad* was published, containing a collection of forty-three poems which had appeared in 1762 and 1763 abusing Bute.

Many of the literary effusions on this royal romance were very offensive. Some were frankly bawdy. The "Masquerade" has more literary merit than most of them.

"The Masquerade or Political Bag-Piper.  
 A new Comic Song, in the Scotch Taste.  
 To the Tune of, the Flowers of Edinburgh.  
 Qui capit, ille facit.

"Bra' John O'Boot was a bonny muckle man,  
 Fra Scotland he came wi' his broadsword in his hand,  
 He came at the Head of a bra' bonny clan,  
 Who the de'el cou'd his muckle muckle suit withstand?  
 He looked so neat  
 And he kissed so sweet,  
 That a Dame of Renown soon gave ear to his suit;  
 Then his Pipe he lugg'd out  
 And ye need not to doubt,  
 But in concert he play'd with her German Flute.

"Quoth he, bonny lassie, your Flute gangs weel,  
 And keeps gude time wi' my Bagpipe clear,  
 Sic music as this is, can surely never fail,  
 In time to accord with an English ear,  
 For what music so sweet,  
 Or what harmony compleat,  
 As the Bagpipe join'd with the German Flute?  
 Then turning up her eyes,  
 Strait the muckle dame replies  
 When the Bagpipe's play'd by my John O'Boot.

"Play away, bonny lad, I have a good store of gold,  
 Your Bag shall be full, while your pipe it can play,  
 You ne'er shall return to a climate so cold,  
 For your Kisses are warmer and sweeter than May;  
 Quoth he, do not mourn,  
 For I ne'er will return,  
 While here I can taste of the Golden Fruit.

Then his Pipe he essay'd  
 And another lilt he play'd  
 In concert sweet—with her German Flute.

“Away, English fools, ye no more shall pretend,  
 In music to vie with a bonny Highland mon;  
 No more shall the lassies of England commend,  
 The fam'd Irish Jigg, when compar'd to my John,  
     For a quick merry strain,  
     That enlivens each vein,  
 Who the De'el with a Scotsman shall e'er dispute?  
     But his Bagpipe alone,  
     Has too much of the drone,  
 And of need must be join'd with my German Flute.

“Come on, bonny lads, then with pleasure advance,  
 Your poor empty scrips and your wallets disown,  
 John O'Boot hears the Bell, sir, and leads up the dance,  
 In the Grand Masquerade at the Thistle and Crown;  
     There sweetmeats and wine  
     Shall intreat you to dine;  
 Your hunger assuage, and your spirits recruit,  
     While more soft to the ear,  
     Hark! the Bagpipe so clear,  
 In consort resounds with the German Flute.

“A fine English Fiddle accords to the strain,  
 A better one never was play'd on before;  
 The French-horn at a distance, would join it amain,  
 And the Spanish Guitar play an overture in score;  
     But woe to the land,  
     If they join in the band,  
 Soon the Fiddle would be broke, and the Fiddlestick to boot,  
     For an Englishman born,  
     Should despise a French-horn,  
 Though his ear may be tickled by a German Flute.”

## PAGE 166

Heavy gambling was the curse of eighteenth-century London society. Young men gambled continually and in every possible way. There is a contemporary story that a man stumbled into White's Coffee House and fell to the floor unconscious. Large wagers were immediately laid as to whether he would recover; those betting on his death were very resentful when a surgeon ordered that the man be bled.

Charles Fox was the leading gambler of the time. He was an ardent follower of horse racing and was an exceptionally good handicapper. At one time he owned, with Lord Foley, some thirty horses. But in this the eighteenth century was not different from the twentieth: a racing stable was always rich with potentialities but poor in actual returns. For Fox it was a venture that had to be given up when all of his creditors began ruthlessly to press him after his elder

brother, Stephen, had an heir born in 1773. The alternatives became flight into exile or an appeal to his sick and wretched father for help. Lord Holland responded magnificently by ordering his agents to "pay and discharge the debts of my son the Hoble. Charles James Fox not exceeding the sum of one Hundred Thousand pounds."

In 1781 he operated, quite successfully with Fitzpatrick a faro bank at Brooks's.

In 1793 some of Fox's loyal friends raised a fund to pay his debts, which were again mounting. He borrowed from any one and every one, even waiters and chairmen. So many professional money-lenders haunted his rooms that he christened them "Jerusalem Chambers." His weakness for gambling offered a ready point of attack for caricaturists and rhymesters. This is a fair specimen of the art of the latter group:

"At Almack's of pigeons I am told there are flocks;  
But it's thought the completest is one Mr. Fox,  
If he touches a card, if he rattles a box,  
Away fly the guineas of this Mr. Fox.  
He has met, I'm afraid, with so many hard knocks  
The cash is not plenty with this Mr. Fox;  
In gaming, 'tis said he's the stoutest of cocks.  
No man can play deeper than this Mr. Fox,  
And he must always lose, for the strongest of locks  
Cannot keep any money for this Mr. Fox.  
No doubt such behaviour exceedingly shocks  
The friends and relations of this Mr. Fox. . . ."

The mad extent to which gambling went is evident from the height of the play. On one occasion Lord Stavordale, Charles Fox's cousin, won £11,000 on a single roll of the dice. Lord Inchquin, Sir Joshua Reynolds's nephew, won £34,000 at one sitting from Sir John Bland, who subsequently committed suicide.

#### PAGE 168

Some of the songs and verse used in the campaign were of an unusually high order. This is not surprising, since Sheridan took so active a part in behalf of Fox. One that is definitely attributed to him dealt with the activities of an Irish Lord on behalf of the government candidates:

"Mountmorres, Mountmorres,  
Whom nobody for is,  
And for whom we none of us care,  
From Dublin you came,  
It had been much the same,  
If your Lordship had stayed where you were."

One of the anonymous productions went:

"Pray how did *Charley* speak last night?  
Was he all burning, strong, and bright,  
As Tully or the Greek?"

"The next time, friend, you would ask this,  
Know that the shorter method is,  
To ask—Did *Charley speak?*"

The government candidates had their versifiers.

"The Fox and the Geese"—

"One uniform dress had this whimsical fellow,  
'Twas a coat of plain blue and a waistcoat of yellow;  
For he gambled among such an infamous pack,  
They left him no more than the coat on his back.

"Of principles tho' (which don't cost quite so dear)  
He had changes and suits for each day of the year,  
Thus he shifted his principles, shifted his speeches,  
But ne'er shifted his coat, nor his waistcoat and breeches."

PAGE 174

Several of Gillray's best caricatures dealt with the royal frugality. Doctor John Wolcot, who wrote under the name of Peter Pindar, had constant recourse to this topic in his merciless descriptions of the monarch. In one he accuses their Majesties of having provisions sent free of carriage from Windsor to Weymouth, where they were summering:

"The Mail arrives!—hark! hark! The cheerful horn,  
To Majesty announcing oil and corn;  
Turnips and cabbages, and soap, and candles,  
And, lo! Each article great Cæsar handles!  
Bread, cheese, salt, catchup, vinegar, and mustard,  
Small beer and bacon, apple pie and custard:  
All, all, from Windsor greets his frugal grace,  
For Weymouth is a d——d expensive place."

The poet also jibes the monarch for his love of getting things for his farm at bargain prices:

"A batch of bullocks!—see great Cæsar run:  
He stops the drover—bargain is begun.  
He feels their ribs and rumps—he shakes his head.  
'Poor, drover, poor—poor, very poor indeed!'  
Cæsar and drover haggle—diff'rence split—  
How much?—a shilling! what a royal hit.  
A load of hay in sight! great Cæsar flies—  
Smells—shakes his head—'Bad hay—sour hay'—he buys.  
Smell, Courtown, smell—good bargain—lucky load—  
Smell, Courtown,—sweeter hay was never mow'd."

PAGE 176

"The Apple-Dumplings and a King"—

"In tempting row the naked Dumplings lay,  
When, lo! the Monarch, in his usual way,  
Like lightning spoke: 'What's this? what's this? what? what?  
Then, taking up a Dumpling in his hand,  
His eyes with admiration did expand,  
And oft did Majesty the Dumpling grapple:

"'Tis monstrous, monstrous hard indeed,' he cried:  
'What makes it, pray, so hard?' The Dame replied,  
Low court'sying, 'Please your Majesty, the Apple.'

“Very astonishing, indeed, strange thing!”  
 (Turning the Dumpling round, rejoined the King).  
 ‘Tis most extraordinary then, all this is;  
 It beats Pinetti’s conjuring all to pieces:  
 Strange I should never of a Dumpling dream.  
 But, goody, tell me where, where, where’s the Seam?”—

“Sir, there’s no Seam,’ quoth she; ‘I never knew  
 That folks did Apple-dumplings sew.’  
 ‘No’ cried the staring Monarch with a grin:  
 ‘How, how the devil got the Apple in?’”

## PAGE 183

Among the Windsor manuscripts there is this letter, which she wrote to her third son, William, when he was 21:

“Ever since your first entering the Navy, the King always has continued to be of the same opinion that you never should go to the Mediterranean and I am convinced that were the whole Board of Admiralty and the whole Navy to propose it at present He would not be moved. When quite a child it would have been Hazardous and at present your very imprudent behaviour when abroad in not loving good Company which you Yourself acknowledge, and the dislike of attending to the advise of those who have guided you has been a means of strengthening the King in His opinion, the impudent manner in which you attack every officer under whose command you have been and whose Experience in their profession was known to all the World, is another reason, which works greatly upon the King’s mind, and above all the great value you set upon your own Knowledge and Sense, make the King look upon the Step as more dangerous. Lord Howe therefore whom You Suspect can have no hand in this and indeed my Dear William you can not give a greater proof of Your vanity than in suspecting everybody your Enemy. . . . One Comfort there is left which I recommend strongly to you and that is, *it is never too late to mend*. . . . Even in England your love of low company has been observed. . . .”

## PAGE 184

Peter Pindar, in the vivisection of his sovereign, heartlessly exposes this:

“A Cat is with her Kittens much delighted;  
 She licks so lovingly their mouths and chins:  
 At every danger, Lord, how Puss is frightened!  
 She curls her back, and swells her tail, and grins,  
 Rolls her wild eyes, and claws the backs of Curs  
 Who smell too curious to her Children’s furs.

“This happens while her Cats are young indeed;  
 But when grown up, alas, how changed their luck!  
 No more she plays at bo-peep with her Breed,  
 Lies down, and mewling bids them come and suck:

“No more she sports and pats them, frisks and purs;  
 Plays with their twinkling tails, and licks their furs,  
 But, when they beg her blessing and embraces,  
 Spits like a dirty Vixen, in their faces.

. . . . .

"So, to some Kings this evil doth belong;  
 Th' intelligence is good, I make no doubt;  
 Who really love their Offspring when they're young,  
 But lose that fond affection when they're stout:  
 Far off they send 'em nor a sixpence give.  
 I wonder, Thomas, where such Monarchs live."

## PAGE 222

The statistical researches by Ernst Kretschmer have established the fact that persons of a body-build that he has termed the pyknic type are, for the most part, extraverted individuals,—men full of physical and mental energy, of the "go-getter" variety, men of a practical makeup who are in tune with their fellows. They are the doers rather than the thinkers. They are generally given to labile moods, and it is from their ranks that the sufferers from manic-depressive disorders are conscripted. "The pyknic type," says Professor Kretschmer, "in the height of its perfection in middle age, is characterized by the pronounced peripheral development of the body cavities (head, breast, and stomach), and a tendency to a distribution of fat about the trunk with a more graceful construction of the motor apparatus (shoulders and extremities). The rough impression in well developed cases is very distinctive; middle height, rounded figure, a soft broad face, on a short massive neck, sitting between the shoulders; the magnificent fat paunch protrudes from the deep vaulted chest which broadens out toward the lower part of the body." George III was 5 feet, 10½ inches tall and weighed about 210 pounds during the fifth decade of life. The numerous engravings which were made of him in middle life strongly suggest Kretschmer's description of the true pyknic type. Moreover, he possessed the true "cyclo-thymic personality," *i.e.*, the labile-mooded personality makeup that Kretschmer found in 96 per cent of individuals of pronounced pyknic habitus.

PAGE 254 *supra*

Some verses of one of the comic pieces ran:

"Mr. Fox, Mr. Fox,  
 Thou'rt knocked down like an Ox,  
 By honest Will Pitt's Argumentum;  
 'Twas a cursed mistake,  
 Such assertions to make,  
 Were they yours, or had Loughboro' lent 'em?"

"'Twas madness or folly,  
 Thus a nation to bully,  
 And thy tools will have cause to repent it;  
 From bad men to free us,  
 'Tis said that 'Quem deus,  
 Vult perdere prius dementat.'"

"Lord North—my Lord North,  
 'Twas vain to set forth  
 For the King thy regard and thy care;  
 These are much better shown,  
 By preserving his Crown  
 Than by giving it up to his Heir."

PAGE 254 *infra*

Among the manuscripts of the Alfred Morrison collection which were recently sold, there was a letter from Robert Burns to Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop dated Ellis Island, April 4, 1789. In the letter he sent a poem which he had just written for a London newspaper, ridiculing the imminent Thanksgiving Services in St. Paul's. Since the Psalmody is not included in collections of the poet's works, it is given in full:

"O sing a new song to the L——  
Make, all and every one,  
A joyful noise, even for the King  
His restoration.

"They set their heads together, I say,  
They set their heads together,  
On right, and left, and every hand,  
We saw none to deliver.

"Thou madest strong two chosen ones  
To quell the wicked's pride;  
That young man great in Issachar,  
The burden bearing tribe.

"And him among the princes chief,  
In our Jerusalem,  
The Judge that's mighty in the law,  
The man that fears thy name.

"Yet they, even they, with all their strength,  
Began to faint and fail;  
Even as two howling, ravening wolves,  
To dogs do turn their tail.

"The sons of Belial in the land,  
Did set their heads together;  
'Come let us sweep them off' said they  
'Like an overflowing river.

"Th' ungodly o'er the just prevailed,  
For so thou hadst appointed;  
That thou mightest greater glory give  
Unto thy own annointed.

"And now thou has restored our State,  
Pity our Kirk also,  
For she by tribulations  
Is now brought very low.

"Consume that high place Patronage,  
From off thy holy hill,  
And in thy fury burn the book  
Even of that man McGill.

"Now hear our prayer, accept our song,  
And fight thy chosen's battle:  
We seek but little, L——, from thee,  
Thou kens we get as little."

## PAGE 275

By the end of the year the views of the more important ministers had become crystallized. In George Rose's "Diaries and Correspondence" there is the following schedule of opinions:

*"For the Question*

Mr. Pitt  
Lord Grenville—strongly  
Mr. Dundas—strongly  
Mr. Windham—strongly  
Lord Spencer—very moderately so.  
Lord Camden—in no office, but decided.

*Against it.*

The Chancellor  
Duke of Portland  
Lord Westmoreland  
Lord Liverpool—absent but vehement by letter.  
Lord Chatham—absent, but understood to be against."

## PAGE 302

The poets of England animated the people with their fervor. Wordsworth appealed to the militia:

"Vanguard of Liberty! Ye men of Kent,  
Ye children of a soil that doth advance,  
Its haughty brow against the coast of France,  
Now is the time to prove your hardiment."

8

Campbell sang of the British sailors:

"Britannia needs no bulwarks,  
No towers along the steep;  
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,  
Her home is on the deep."

## PAGE 305

During the Regency, gentle Charles Lamb gave his view of Prince George in verse:

"Io! Pæan! Io! sing,  
To the finny people's King!  
Not a mightier whale than this,  
In the vast Atlantic is,  
Not a fatter fish than he,  
Flounders round the Polar sea:  
See his blubber at his gills,—  
What a world of drink he swills!  
Such his person—next declare,  
Musel who his companions are.  
Every fish of generous kind  
Stands aside, or shrinks behind.  
Name or title, what has he?  
Is he Regent of the sea?  
By his bulk and by his size,



By his oily qualities,  
This (or else my eyesight fails),  
This should be the Prince of Whales."

One might have expected Byron to have been more sympathetic with the Prince's frailties than Charles Lamb. But there is little reason to believe that he was, from the lines in his "Windsor Poetics," written after the poet had been in the Windsor vault, standing between the coffins of Charles I and Henry VIII:

"Famed for contemptuous breach of sacred ties,  
By headless Charles see heartless Henry lies,  
Between them stands another sceptred thing—  
It moves, it reigns—in all but name, a King:  
Charles to his people, Henry to his wife,  
In him the double tyrant starts to life:  
Justice and death have mixed their dust in vain,  
Each royal vampire makes to life again.  
Ah, what tombs avail!—since these disgorge  
The blood and dust of both—to mould a George!"

The black-bordered issue of *The London Times* which announced the death of George IV asked the pertinent but rather embarrassing questions: "What eye has wept for him? What heart has heaved one throb of unmercenary sorrow?" The last query seemed particularly appropriate since the last of his mistresses, Lady Conyngham, remained at the castle during his final weeks, overcome alternately with attacks of grief and spells of garnering the most valuable available mementos of her dying royal lover. Fulford, in his *George the Fourth*, records that at the time the lines went about: "First she packed and then she prayed and then she packed again."

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